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Jean Jacques Rousseau



JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU.

From Portrait by Ramsay.

Jean Jacques Rousseau

BY

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JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU.

I.

GENEVA.

IN 1895 the late Joseph Texte, the learned French student of comparative literature, published a thought-impelling book: 'Jean Jacques Rousseau et les origines du cosmopolitisme littéraire.' As may be guessed from the title, Texte's arguments aim at the representation of Rousseau as originator of what he calls literary cosmopolitanism. Now Texte uses the word "cosmopolitanism" in this connection in a sense common with Frenchmen, but different from the meaning usually accepted. They make it synonymous with "exotism," and thereby describe the foreign, un-French, intellectual element that permeated French literature during the course of the last century. In literary circles in France the word has, for a long time, and especially during the last decade, been a shibboleth, by which the nationalists (chiefly) describe the enemy, whom they think it necessary to eradicate. By it, they mean to express the same idea as by another dreadful word, "septentrionalism"—the spirit of the North, the Germanic spirit—the opposite of the French spirit, the classic spirit—in fact, the opposite of *l'esprit gaulois*. These raging nationalists are devoured by admiration for and worship of everything French, and by mistrust and suspicion of everything foreign; it looks

as though they have very little confidence in their own race's powers of self-preservation—they are so Chinese in their eagerness to keep all foreign elements out of their country, so hysterical in their detestation of everything that is not French, so narrow-minded in their rejection of all cosmopolitanism.

Joseph Texte uses the word in this meaning, but he is neither nationalist nor Chinaman—he considers the pure, old, unalloyed, and unadulterated French classicism as irrevocably lost, but he does not look upon the Germanic infusion as any great misfortune; on the contrary, he thinks that the intellectual nature of the French has gained by the crossing of the races, has expanded, grown in richness and fulness and variety, without losing any of its peculiarities—that Victor Hugo is just as French as Racine, even though he could not have been evolved without Schiller and Byron.

So Texte analyses “the literary cosmopolitanism” as a fortunate phenomenon and attributes its origin to Jean Jacques Rousseau. His explanation is based partly on the fact that Rousseau had assimilated certain Germanic, “Northern,” notably English elements, partly on the circumstance that he, on account of his peculiar temperament and the course of his development, became the great revolter against the classic spirit, and thus prepared the way by his writing for the invasion of the German spirit. He was the father of “literary cosmopolitanism.”

The author of the latest important Rousseau biography, Louis Ducros, denies the correctness of Texte's statement, and is of the opinion that the origin of literary cosmopolitanism in France is to be found in Mme. de Staël and not in Rousseau. Ducros does not attempt to establish his proof, but it is easy to understand to what he refers. He is thinking, first of all, of Mme. de Staël's ‘L'Allemagne’ and the flood of German thought which streamed into France *via* that canal, and which in a high degree helped to stamp the character of French romanticism.

Nevertheless, I am quite convinced that Texte is right, and that Rousseau was the source of the movement. Rousseau was a cosmopolite, and, not only in the limited meaning of the term, as Texte uses it, the forerunner of French literature's renaissance through "Septentrionalism," but he was more—he was a world-ferment; and just on this account he may be used as the starting-point for an examination of Europe in the nineteenth century.

Yet neither is Ducros wholly wrong when he says later: "But if Rousseau was not a cosmopolite, as has been maintained, what was he? . . . He was, above all things, a Genevan." Quite true, but the one does not exclude the other. Shakespeare was first of all an Englishman, but this does not prevent his ruling over the entire world. Ibsen was first of all a Norwegian, but at the same time he was a European.

Rousseau was a Genevan. It is only necessary to look through his writings to come upon this fact at every turn. In the index to his collected works we find no less than one hundred and thirty-five places that directly refer to Geneva and Genevans. The lake of Geneva is the central point of the scenery of his great romance, 'La Nouvelle Héloïse.' The Genevan community is the only point of light he can find in his philippic on the abominations of culture in his treatise on Inequality; the Genevan constitution is the foundation on which he builds his Utopia in 'Contrat Social.' Genevan polity is the subject of weighty and prophetic discussions in 'Lettres de la Montagne.' In spite of everything, Geneva always occupied a tender place in his heart; now and then his soul felt some bitterness when he remembered that the Genevan government had caused his two most precious books to be burned by the executioner at Molard and had exiled him from the town; but he could never become indifferent to his birthplace. Citoyen de Genève was the only title of honour to which he aspired, and Citoyen de Genève was the name under which he was known over the whole world.

"Never have I seen the walls of this happy town, never have I entered its gates, without being seized with a spasm of the heart which came from an overpowering tenderness." Thus he writes in 'Confessions,' and as late as 1775, a few years before his death, he wrote to the Prince of Beloselski—

"O, lake, on whose banks I passed the sweet hours of my childhood! charming landscape, where I saw for the first time the majestic and touching sunrise; where I experienced the first emotions of the heart—the first bursts of a genius which has become too imperious and too renowned; alas! I shall never see you again! Those bell-towers which rise aloft amidst oaks and pines, those herds of sheep, those workshops, those manufactories, dotted oddly about on torrents, precipices, or the summits of cliffs; those venerable trees, those streams, those prairies, those mountains, which witnessed my birth,—they will never see me more." (*Ceuvres*, xii. 250.)

Rousseau was born in Geneva. This fact is of more significance than, for example, that Björnson was born in Kvikne or Ibsen in Skien. This too, of course, has a certain significance, but it is infinitesimal in comparison with other vital circumstances. But the influence of Rousseau's birth-place was one of the more important components of his extremely complex character, and, at the same time, it was the spring of his life-work. We must therefore try to obtain a clear idea of Geneva in Rousseau's days, and of the qualities he took with him on his life's journey—as a Genevan.

The Geneva in which Rousseau was born on June 28, 1712, was Calvin's Geneva. About two hundred years before Rousseau's birth, the famous theologian, Jean Calvin, fleeing from Picardy, his native country, had come by chance to the little Swiss republic. The Genevan reformer Farel persuaded him that he had been directed thither in accordance with a dispensation of Providence, and that God claimed his work for the new evangelical parish of Geneva. He remained there the rest of his life.

Calvin was a personality of enormous dimensions, a religious genius with a power of conviction that permitted no shadow of doubt of the truths that God had revealed in the Holy Book, and a proper understanding of which He, by a special act of grace, had given him alone; a will-power to which the world's history has but few parallels, which conquered all difficulties and placed all surroundings in subjection; a giant-like intelligence of a species conspicuously logical, which having once adopted a point of view was able to construct a system of principles in which not a single link was lacking, not a single juncture weak; and finally one of the world's greatest organisers, one not only capable of systematising his own thoughts, but also of putting them into execution, and one who was also successful in systematising the community which surrounded him, down to the smallest details.

When Calvin passed through the gates of Geneva for the first time in 1536, he came to a town which, in every respect, was as antipathetic to him as it was possible to be; twenty years later it was transformed, remade in his image. He came to a people who were known for their *joie de vivre*, who loved noisy public festivals, whose theatrical performances were their pride, whose besetting sins were luxury and loose morals. When he closed his tired eyes in 1564 the theatre had been closed, dancing was forbidden, festivities unheard of, luxury and frivolity had been thrust away. Happy Geneva had become a gloomy house of prayer.

Calvin's spirit had put a stamp upon both public and private life, and the little republic continued to live under the influence of the reformer for generation after generation,—long, long after his death.

Calvin had accomplished his aims without disturbing the constitution. It remained practically unchanged with its *conseil général*—its *conseil des deux cents*—and its *petit conseil*—with a certain aristocratic tendency to advance the balance of power from *le conseil général* to *le petit conseil*. But the constitution of Geneva was not old, the life to be led

within its elastic bounds had not yet become fixed. Calvin respected the constitutional forms, but he reserved for himself the right to decide what contents should be poured into these forms.

Though not always the actual compiler, he was nevertheless the real author of the extensive legislation that up to this time was still unexecuted—the church laws, the town laws, the prison laws, the police laws,—not a single paragraph was inserted in them without his approval and assistance, not a jot nor a tittle which was antagonistic to his spirit or to the one thought that controlled him.

That thought was God. The world, his fellow-creatures, the community, and individuals, the church and the state—all of these existed only for the glory of God. All laws, all institutions, life itself, should be so ordered in his new home that it could in letter and in spirit bear the name, *la cité de Dieu*; and as the outer symbol of this Calvin, as early as 1542, caused the initials of Jesus Christ to be inscribed on the gates of the city and on all public buildings by the side of the city's escutcheon.

One often hears Calvinistic Geneva described as a theocracy. Strictly speaking, this is not correct, for a formal union of church and state was never established; on the contrary, Calvin took great care to keep these two powers separate by administrative means, in order to elevate the autonomy and independence of the church above all worldly authority. But in reality the Genevan republic was as conspicuous a theocracy as history has ever shown, for state and church had one and the same goal; the ordinances of the church and the laws of the community both aimed at defending the true faith, at making the citizens of the state and the members of the community children of God. All public measures tended "*invigilare gregi Domini, ut Deus pure colatur.*"

Baum and Cunitz, in their excellent edition of Calvin's works, have collected, in the twenty-first volume, a number of extracts from those public protocols of Geneva that show

any connection with Calvin's life. These dry, concise documents speak a living language to us, and initiate us, in a very instructive way, into the daily life of Genevan citizens; we feel as though we had become Calvin's contemporaries. It is a noticeable fact in regard to these protocols that there are no differences to observe; protocols of the town council, protocols of church meetings, government protocols, protocols of the consistory—we pass from the one to the other without remarking that the *milieu* had changed. Whether in city council or court, in church-session or in the consistory, we hear the same questions discussed, the same regulations enforced, the same punishments meted out to the same crimes; there is no distinction in the subjects handled, the secular and the ecclesiastical authorities direct their activities toward the same goal: "to watch over the flock of the Lord, so that God may be worshipped in purity." In fact, we find ourselves always either in a church tribunal or in a society for the promotion of morals. In every respect, from the most important questions of life down to the merest bagatelles, the secular and the ecclesiastical authorities watch over the thoughts and the desires, the words and the deeds, of every single citizen of Geneva.

In the council protocol for Monday the 15th of November 1546 we read: "M. Calvin and other priests of the city have very wisely proposed that steps should be taken to avoid all scandal in regard to those who take their children to be christened and give them names not approved by the Holy Book, such as Claudius, Mama, Amadeus, and other similar names. On this account the council authorises the above-mentioned Calvin to make a list of the names that are not to be permitted, to publish this list, and afterwards to send messages to all the district authorities, who must inform every single person within their respective jurisdictions."

Calvin soon had his list ready, and by the following Monday *le petit conseil* published an edict forbidding the citizens to make use of the old names, Claudius, Amadeus, &c., which

might furnish an opportunity for "the worship of idols and witchcraft"; they were referred to the Bible, chiefly the Old Testament, where they would find plenty of pious names, and soon they were without number—the Abrahams, Gideons, Mordecais, Melchizedeks, Jeremiahs, and Zachariahs. This is the reason that Rousseau's father went about with a patriarch's name, Isaac, while he himself had no less than two apostolic names, Jean and Jacques.

The most peculiar and most important of all the institutions that Calvin organised was the so-called consistory. Although it was by no means the official organ of public authority, nevertheless the spirit that emanated from the consistory permeated the entire Genevan community and gave it its character.

The consistory was composed both of ecclesiastical and of secular elements. The clergymen of the town belonged to it by right of office, but in addition to these, twelve of the oldest citizens of the town were chosen (the council of the elders),—"men of good and honorable conduct, blameless life and above all suspicion, animated by spiritual wisdom and the fear of God."

The consistory's activities were twofold: it had the right both of control and of judgment. It kept an eye on the orthodoxy and conduct of every citizen, and, in case of transgression, meted out the punishment within its power. The protocols tell us how it exercised its authority.

"The council of elders" had regular meetings once a week, but the matters they discussed were often so numerous and so complicated that they had to hold extra sessions. If a citizen in gay company had let slip a frivolous word, if he were discovered to be in possession of a crucifix or picture of the Madonna, if he had not been seen at church more than twice in the week, if he had not looked sufficiently reverential on his way to the altar, if a smile had passed over his face at a wedding, if two otherwise honourable men had whiled away an hour or so at ninepins, if any one had taken part in or even looked on at a dance, if one had been

seen talking to a lady too often in the street,—in all such and innumerable other cases the sinner was called before the consistory, to explain his conduct to these worthy gentlemen. If he did not answer the first summons it was repeated, and if he continued disobedient after the third, he was reported to the civic authorities (who were always eager to do their duty) and cast into prison, where he stayed until he became humble and was willing to bend to the decision of the consistory. Many a worthy old citizen was summoned and cross-questioned in regard to his most private affairs or examined in the catechism, and if he did not reply promptly and accurately, was sent to the clergyman to brush up his Sunday-school learning.

It was almost impossible to escape, for the eyes of the consistory were many and well-distributed; the elders were always chosen to represent all quarters of the town, and as there were not more than 13,000 inhabitants in all, it was a limited number that each member of the consistory controlled. His virtuous curiosity accomplished all the more thorough work. Not only did each member have access to the houses of those under his control, but he was obliged to go to them and inspect the state of affairs, to see whether the children were sent to school regularly, whether the wife had a lover, whether the servants were well-disciplined in the true faith, whether every day was opened with the authorised morning prayer. Every single house in Geneva was inspected in this manner at least once a-year. But still more effective was the daily control exercised; the members knew personally every single creature in their respective districts, they listened with interest to every word dropped; they were often looked upon as detectives whose standing increased in proportion to their cleverness and eagerness in spying out, reporting, and convicting transgressors.

It is true that their power of punishment was very limited; it was restricted to the so-called ecclesiastical or "spiritual" punishments. The method of procedure was

thus: When the member had caught an offender in a misdemeanour, he first tried, by gentle exhortations, to bring him to repent and reform, but if the misdemeanour was repeated, the sinner was summoned to the consistory *in pleno*, where he was made the subject of choice railings from the zealous clergymen and their willing imitators among the laymen; he was overwhelmed with terms of abuse and reproved for his sins in the sharpest language; and sometimes he did not escape with this—for reprimand or correction was the mildest punishment,—but was obliged to pay heavy fines to the church, or in case of serious offence, to make public apology on his knees, or if he was considered to deserve the highest punishment of all, he was excommunicated. We see that these so-called spiritual punishments were none too mild, and of course they had perceptible “civic” consequences, as the consistory did not always confine itself to its own punishments, but after having put these into execution they delivered the culprit into the hands of the civic authorities for further treatment, and these gentlemen always turned an obedient ear to the wishes and desires of the consistory. In this way it sometimes happened, and not rarely, that unhappy creatures with heretical tendencies began by receiving a reprimand in the consistory and ended on the scaffold, after having experienced the torture-chamber (which was strongly recommended by Calvin).

In addition, the consistory and its members had other and more direct means of exerting their influence. They sometimes attended the town council and presented complaints and demands that were always given consideration. For instance, Calvin for a long time had looked unfavourably on the many taverns that in spite of everything flourished in the Cité de Dieu. In the spring of 1544 he succeeded in issuing through the council a proclamation which prohibited the frequenting of taverns. Anyone who offended against this law was punished by imprisonment and fine.

However, the authorities understood that human beings must have assembly places of some kind, and as substitute

for the taverns they established the so-called abbeys, a sort of ecclesiastical casino: there were five of them, one in each town-division, and they were under the surveillance of the chief of police and of the syndics. So the citizens of Geneva who could not resist their desire for society had to satisfy these desires under safe ecclesiastical and civic control, and in order to be systematic they strictly enjoined every man to keep to the abbey of his quarter. In the month of May an extensive proclamation was issued prescribing the manner in which both the guests and the innkeepers should conduct themselves in these new places of amusement. If any one should be guilty of an oath, or should enter upon useless discussions, or behave in any way indecorously, he was to be shown out and denied admittance in the future. The innkeeper was strictly enjoined to report every improper word and every improper act to the authorities, and he was stringently forbidden to serve food or drink to any guest who had not first asked a blessing. He was a sort of public functionary, and had no right to make any profit on his refreshments. There could not have been much cheerfulness or sociability in these theological taverns—nor did they have very long lives.

Notwithstanding these and similar efforts, many years went by ere Calvin succeeded in conquering the sinful inclinations of his fellow-citizens; but he did not give in, he struggled valiantly and was finally triumphant. The consistory became his obedient tool, and the council followed his instructions no less willingly.

On the 27th of September 1558 the clergyman Nicolas Gallasius, Calvin's faithful and confidential friend, appeared before the council, and in the name of the consistory described in dark colours the immoderate luxury that had crept into Geneva, especially among women. He declared that such sinfulness would not be suffered even in heathen countries, and a Christian community had every right to interfere. The council, in reply, acknowledged the complete justice of the complaint, and it also laid special stress on

the offence in the eyes of God and the bad example exhibited by the luxury of the upper classes. During the ensuing days the council had several sessions called to discuss measures which, in accordance with the consistory's proposal, should put restrictions on luxury in clothes and entertainments. By the 13th of October the draft of the measure was laid before "le petit conseil," and the next morning the new luxury-law was cried through the streets of Geneva, accompanied by the blare of trumpets.

Laws interfering so brutally with private and family life as these luxury-laws have scarcely ever been enacted. They began with stipulations in regard to costume. It was forbidden all citizens of the town, inhabitants, and subjects, to wear clothes trimmed with gold or silver embroidery, borders, braiding, laces, or ornaments. Chains, bracelets, necklaces, gold buttons, belts, and braids worked with gold, in fact, any use of gold, pearls, or precious stones—all were forbidden; also it was forbidden to wear silk or any expensive imported material, furs, velvet trimming, and lace, or any unnecessary superfluity of hats, caps, trousers, or coats—especially for the lower classes, and the women's hats were not to cost over a certain price. Men were forbidden to go with long, parted hair and ear-rings; women to wear any headdress or precious stones in their hair, or to curl it or dress it in any fancy manner. On the whole, all exaggerated or eccentric fashions were forbidden, especially if they were indecent, as low-necked gowns for example—only ladies of the highest standing were permitted a certain freedom, within strict bounds, in regard to neckwear, laces, and ruches. They had also the right to wear as many as four rings, but if wives of artisans and unaffianced girls did so, they were fined 60 sols, and the rings were confiscated.

Servants were obliged to content themselves with a dress that was in accordance with ancient custom; the material should be simple and cheap, the colour modest, above all not red; their caps should cost no more than 18 sols, &c.

"Altogether," thus ends the edict, "every one must keep

carefully to his rank and standing, and be an example of Christian modesty ;—parents must see that their children observe the above law strictly. He who acts in opposition to them must pay 5 gulden for the first offence, 10 for a repetition of it, and 25 if it happens the third time ; in addition, the forbidden clothes and jewels will be confiscated and the right to further punishment reserved.” And as a final means of ensuring observance of these prohibitions, tailors were forbidden, under threat of still greater punishment, to import any sort of new clothing without the permission of the authorities, and Genevan citizens, inhabitants, and subjects were not allowed to sew any article of clothing not permitted by the new laws.

The second part of the laws drew equally sharp limits for luxury in entertainments and family feasts ; the number of courses permitted at weddings or other parties (the chief dishes as well as the side dishes) was fixed accurately ; the worthy gentlemen were especially strict about dessert ; all sorts of delicacies such as preserved fruit were absolutely forbidden. There were likewise regulations as to how many servants one might be permitted to have. The number of guests allowed was not great, and on more ordinary occasions, such as christenings and engagement parties, which, by the way, only families of rank were permitted to have, they were not allowed to invite more than ten. However, at weddings it was only the poor people who were limited to this number. Well-to-do citizens could have twenty, and the nobles thirty guests. The less prosperous classes were fined twenty-five gulden if they had any sort of game, poultry, or pastry at their parties. The same punishment was administered to the cook guilty of preparing a meal which violated this rule.

There were also paragraphs in regard to wedding presents. The bride and the bridegroom were allowed to give each other presents, but modest and inexpensive ones, otherwise they would be fined twenty-five sols ; the handsome bouquets, tied with gold cord and pearls, that were usually

sent on ceremonious occasions, were also forbidden. The law even provided regulations for a woman in childbed; a penalty of sixty sols was levied on any one visiting her; even on the christening day only the godfather and nearest relations were admitted. She herself should not deck herself in an improper way in bed, should not wear shawls or scarfs of new style, but should look as modest and retiring as possible, or she would be fined sixty sols.

This marvellous document ends thus: "In order that these measures may be all the more carefully observed and followed, we have decided that it shall be published and read every fifth year in an assembly of all the citizens, summoned the first Sunday in June, to prevent any one's acting in opposition to it, or changing anything in it, unless approved by the little, the great, and the general council of this town."

One may say what one will about a community regulated thus down to the slightest details, but one thing cannot be denied, and that is the brilliant systematisation from beginning to end. Calvin did not stop half way on any point, but in his organisation as well as in his teaching he drew consistent conclusions from the premises he had chosen.

It is clear that a man of this character would take a keen interest in what is the foundation of any community, the corner-stone on which the whole thing rests—I mean education. In Geneva the school system had for a long time been shamefully neglected, and there was no university at all. Calvin from the first had viewed these conditions with anxiety, but several years went by before he in his restless activity found time to look into them. But in the fifties he took the matter up, and the same consistency and firmness, the same genius for organisation, followed him in this as in all his work. He made all wheels fit into each other with admirable accuracy and unite in putting into motion the great wheel—the great purpose that was never out of his consciousness—Gloria Dei. The reform work was completed in 1559, and on the 5th of June the university or academy was dedicated. Beza, Calvin's chief pupil, who had been

appointed rector, made the inaugural address, but his words were infused with Calvin's spirit. "I beseech you," he said in conclusion, turning to the students, "I beseech you, in the name of God, be not lacking in your duty. You are familiar with Cicero's oft-repeated words: knowledge without uprightness and virtue is not wisdom, but folly. Even the blind philosophers of heathenism have acknowledged that the aim and object of all good art is to teach good conduct of life. What a shame then it would be for us not to comprehend this and show it in our acts. We cannot wonder that the heathens fell short of the goal, as they knew not true virtue but only its caricature. But what excuse will you have, you who from your very childhood are given the means of nourishing yourselves on true piety and true wisdom, if you will only apply your studies in accordance with written laws and standards? Neither will the help of the Almighty, which you cannot do without, fail you."

Orthodoxy and virtue were the aims of school and university. Calvin's schools did not give exclusive attention to the intelligence of the pupil, but just as much to his will and character; the important part was not information, but education; information was only a means in the service of education, and the object of education was to make the pupils children of God, worthy citizens of God's kingdom, believing what is right and doing what is right without offending on any point.

Calvin's school was a masterpiece of organisation which, in clearness of vision, in unity of execution, and in logical consistency between the various parts, can only be compared with the schools of the Jesuits, whose leaders, on so many other points also, took the Genevan colleges as models.

With the school and its continuation—the university or the academy—the future, in as far as it could be, was secured; through these institutions the rising generation was led in whatever direction Calvin's strong spirit wished. But more than that—he also did what he could to take care that the judgment of history should not err in its appreciation of the revolution which this reform work brought about

in the little republic. The 2nd of June 1562—a year or two before Calvin's death—Roset submitted to the council an elaborate chronicle, a history of the Genevan Reformation. The object of this book, as the author himself declared, was “to bear witness to the grace that God has shown our city,” and, for once and all, to give posterity the proper view of the history of Geneva. The council, which was composed exclusively of men of whose Calvinistic tendencies there was not the least shadow of doubt, listened to the reading of this work chapter for chapter, approved of the exposition, and granted the author a handsome money gift. By this, the same power of State that had issued edicts as to how women should do their hair also laid an embargo on the opinion of future ages as to how all this happened. At any rate, there now existed for all time an official exposition of the circumstances sanctioned by the State-power itself.

Two years after these council meetings Calvin drew his last breath. His deathbed was surrounded by the whole venerable company, all the clergymen of the town, to whom he dictated his last wishes. He reviewed his life and all his good deeds—and they found favour in his own eyes. And yet there were many things that this strong, hard man had trampled upon in order to accomplish his ends: to make room for himself and his work he had not scrupled to drive out the old Genevan families who resisted him and to replace them with French fugitives, who became his willing tools; to free his town from heretical thoughts, he did not shrink from either torture or the stake. One might have expected that now, when he was about to wander hence, convinced as he was that he was soon to appear before his Maker, he would have hesitated a moment in his assurance, that a doubt would have risen in his soul; but no, not a shadow of regret darkened his dying hours. Until his very last moment he was still confident that he was God's chosen messenger, and the first and last injunction he laid upon his disciples and successors was that they must hold out and not change jot or tittle of that that had been done.

II.

GENEVA AND ROUSSEAU.

IN the last chapter I attempted, by relating a number of striking characteristics, to give an idea of the laws and institutions that Calvin forced upon Geneva in the course of thirty years of untiring activity.

What was the result of all this daily control? How did it affect the citizens who lived under it? What sort of life developed under the influence of these luxury-laws, this consistory, and this government, which was the consistory's willing tool? The answer depends largely on one's point of view. Contemporary reformed Europe looked upon Geneva as a jewel admired by all. The faithful flocked from all quarters to the holy city of the new religion to hear Calvin's lectures at the academy or his sermons in St Peter's Church, and all were carried away with enthusiasm over what they saw about them,—the earnestness, the virtue, and the sincere reverence of the Genevan citizens. In 1556 the famous Scottish reformer, John Knox, spent some time there, and he declared that one must go to Geneva in order to learn true Christianity. "I maintain without hesitation," he wrote, "that since the days of the apostles there has not existed a more perfect school of Christ than here. Of course there are other places where Christ is preached in truth, but I have never seen anywhere morals and faith so thoroughly reformed." And the Italian reformer Vergerius,¹ a Catholic bishop, who had been commissioned by the Pope

¹ Stähelin : Calvin, i. 480 ff.

to refute Luther's teachings, but who in studying these teachings became converted to the principles of the Reformation and went over to the evangelical church, wrote in the same year: "I have seen many Churches that have been reformed, but none that have succeeded as well as in Geneva." And then he proceeds to describe one by one the institutions of the Genevan Church, the sermons and the catechisings, the consistory, the psalm-singing, the house-examinations, the clerical appointments, the school system, and the charity institutions. The whole description aims at presenting the Calvinistic structure as the model evangelical church. Of course the old reformer Farel, who in his day contributed a great deal to the master's brilliant triumphs, wrote most enthusiastically of the new state of affairs in Geneva. It was difficult for him to tear himself away when he visited the city. He wrote to a friend in the spring of 1557: "I have recently been in Geneva, and have never been more pleased with the town than this time; I could hardly bear to leave. Not that I should wish to teach such a large parish and one so greedy for God's word, but only to hear and learn as the least of the people. I would rather be the least in Geneva than the first in any other place."

And Sulzer describes Geneva, in a letter to Bullinger (1556), as "*insigne religionis veræque pietatis domicilium*."

This is the evidence of sympathisers; others, who look on life in Geneva with a more human and less prejudiced eye, do not express themselves so favourably. The well-known French poet, Joachim du Bellay, about 1550, travelled from Rome through Upper Italy and Switzerland, making hasty notes of the towns through which he passed. The picture which he drew of Geneva—or rather of the French colony in Geneva, which was the predominating element there—was far from flattering, and does not at all resemble either John Knox's or Vergerius's brilliant accounts.

"Je les ai vus, Bizet, et si bien m'en souvient :
j'ai vu dessus leur front la repentance peinte.

Comme on voit ces esprits—qui là-bas font leur plainte
ayant passé le lac d'où plus on ne revient.

Un croire de léger les fols y entretient,
 sur un prétexte faux de liberté contrainte ;
 les coupables fuitivs y demeurent par crainte ;
 les plus fins et rusés, honte les y retient !

Au demeurant, Bizet, l'avarice et l'envie,
 et tout cela qui plus tourmente notre vie,
 domine en ce lieu-là plus qu'en tout autre lieu.
 Je ne vis oncques tant l'un l'autre contredire
 je ne vis oncques tant l'un de l'autre médire :
 Vrai est que, comme ici, l'on n'y jure point Dieu."

Who was right—Du Bellay or Knox? Both, I believe; which I shall try to prove in a later chapter when I collect and render an account of the qualities that Rousseau, the Genevan, carried through life.

The celebrated Swiss Rousseau biographer, Prof. Eugène Ritter, in his instructive book, 'La Famille et la Jeunesse de Jean Jacques Rousseau' (Hachette, 1891), has collected a number of excerpts from the protocols of this time which furnish us with many interesting facts, especially in regard to the consistory. It is quite remarkable that there are almost no transitional stages—the entries from 1700 read as though they were a direct continuation of those of 1550. Of course there are some differences—in language and orthography, which become more and more modern; in customs, which become less harsh, so that they no longer burn heretics at Molard, but content themselves with burning their books. But the spirit throughout is always the same, as we shall see from these examples—

Protocol of the consistory of February 4, 1706.—Report from the worthy pastor Turretini, senior, who was commissioned to secure information concerning a ball which had taken place in his district. He found that the day before "l'Escalade" (December 11), and also on New Year's day, M. Rousseau gave parties in honour of a senator from Chambéry, whose wife had wanted some amusement, but the guests consisted only of relatives and neighbours. Resolution adopted: The aforementioned Rousseau was to be summoned.

Protocol of February 11, 1706. — M. David Rousseau, dizenier, appeared, summoned for having had a ball at his

house. He stated that it was true that his children and grand-children had assembled at his house on that day, that they had played games in the room of a senator from Chambéry who was visiting him, that there was dancing, and that his children had played the violin there, but there were no strangers present; however, he confessed that M. Clément, his near relation, had also been present. Resolution adopted: In consideration of the circumstance that only his nearest relations took part, one confines oneself to a warning to M. Rousseau not to give occasion to any sort of scandal.

This David Rousseau, who was sixty-four years old at that time, was Jean Jacques' grandfather: the reason he escaped so lightly was certainly because he was a respected old citizen of the community, and, as *dizenier*, belonged in a certain way to the official class also.

David Rousseau is not the only one of Rousseau's ancestors we meet in the protocols of Geneva. His maternal grandfather, Jacques Bernard, was somewhat of a "*mauvais sujet*," especially in regard to women, and many less edifying details from his private life are preserved in the republic's archives. Neither is his mother's reputation absolutely unspotted, although most of the entries in the protocol refer to offences of a more innocent type, and serve rather to throw light on the unbelievable prudishness of the consistory than to cast serious suspicion on Suzanne Bernard's virtue.

It was a certain M. Vincent Sarasin, a married man belonging to the aristocracy of Geneva, who found pleasure in Mlle. Suzanne's company. He occasionally paid her a visit in her parents' house, and was likewise sometimes seen with her on the street. But in Geneva it was by no means permissible for a married man to compromise a young woman by paying her visits; and as private warnings did not put a stop to these meetings, the consistory interfered.

Protocol of the consistory June the 13th, 1695.—It has been reported that M. Vincent Sarasin continues to visit Mlle. Bernard in spite of repeated warnings and admonitions to keep absolutely away from her and to have no association

with her. Resolved to summon them both as well as her mother, Mme. Bernard.

And this important matter occupies the time of these worthy gentlemen for almost a quarter of a year; it gives occasion for meeting after meeting: June 13, June 27, July 11, July 18, July 25, August 1, August 8, August 15, August 22, August 23, August 27. It ended with a severe reprimand to poor Suzanne, and the sternest injunction "de n'avoir plus aucun commerce avec M. Vincent Sarasin."

During the course of the affair a fresh complaint against Suzanne was lodged. Protocol of the consistory July 18.—Report that Mlle. Bernard was seen dressed as a man or a peasant girl in the neighbourhood of the theatre where certain quacks sell their medicines and act their farces and comedies. Resolved that the truth of this statement be examined and the report handed in within eight days.

It interests us to see from this protocol that the Genevan government really had permitted the performance of a sort of play, though this was not without the most serious protest from the Council of the Elders. We see from the Government's protocol that the consistory had sent deputies to the council to express a "strong and serious protest against the permission given the 'quack doctors' (*médecins spagiriques*), the brothers Lescot, to put up a theatre where they could sell their medicines; and as it has likewise been permitted at the aforementioned theatre to have violins and to dance there and to hold a performance, the worthy consistory cannot hear of this without groaning in righteous pain to see that this town, which has heretofore been unpolluted by jugglery, play-acting, and dancing, has also allowed itself to be carried away."

On this occasion the council proposed and passed a resolution "that so long as the aforementioned brothers Lescot and their assistants at the theatre are not guilty of any unseemliness either in words or acts, in pose or gesture, they may remain in possession of the permission which has been granted them."

Such a revolt against the wishes of the consistory would never have been ventured upon in Calvin's time, but never-

theless it is really still the spirit of Calvin that rules in all essentials, both in the protest of the consistory and—though in a mild form—also in the decision of the council. The reformer's dying wish had been fulfilled. Generally speaking, his work had not been interfered with; there was the same ideal of morality, the same fear of God, the same reciprocal control from above and from below—as much so during Rousseau's youth as in the height of Calvin's power.

It is obvious that during the course of years these conditions would set a gradually deepening stamp on the Genevan character and give it a conspicuous peculiarity. What form then did this character take in the eighteenth century?

Voltaire, who for many years lived at Ferney in the neighbourhood of the republic, was far from charmed with it. His judgment coincides on all essential points with that of Joachim du Bellay written in the sixteenth century. It is true that on his arrival he was carried away by the beauty of the country, but his enthusiasm did not last long: "I live in a land which looks like an earthly Paradise, but which in reality is accursed by God and does not offer a single pleasant attraction" (letter to the Countess of Saint-Point, 1/10/68). In another place he describes Geneva as "a gloomy town, where everyone is in a bad humour"—or more decidedly, "envy is the predominating vice of this beehive where hatred is distilled instead of honey" (*du fiel au lieu du miel*).

And there are many opinions similar to Voltaire's. In 1811 Stendahl wrote: "They rejoice in their pride and tenacious virtues. Their city, which I have visited, seems like a prison. I have never seen anywhere a town so silent and so sad." And so on down to our own day, when the well-known Genevan poet and thinker, Amiel, characterised his fellow-citizens in the following verse:—

"Race de mécontents, tes fils ont l'énergie,
la science, l'honneur et la droiture; mais
l'amour-propre est chez eux l'éternelle vigie:
le moi de Genevois ne sommeille jamais.
Leur mérite est réel, mais il manque de charme,
et même leurs vertus ne plaisent pas beaucoup."

Rousseau who, as a rule, viewed his Genevans with approval, was nevertheless not blind to their weaknesses. He found them pedantic and affected, and thought they talked more like books than like men. "While people in France write as they talk, in Geneva they talk as they write," he says in '*La Nouvelle Héloïse*.' They are over fond of arguing, he says, will have the last word at any cost, their conversation has a tendency to turn into dissertation, they are neither so attractive nor so amusing as Frenchmen; nor could he acquit them of greediness and envy.

But, on the other hand, they are extremely industrious and honest, they love freedom and uphold its rights with unparalleled courage; they are pious and God-fearing, enlightened, fond of reading, and in general highly interested in intellectual subjects; family life is exemplary, frivolity and faithlessness anathematised. And although latterly some pernicious customs have been admitted, nevertheless Geneva towers far above other European towns with respect to morality and homely virtues. This is about the gist of the long letter on Geneva and Genevans that Claire wrote to Julie.

If we collect these various accounts we can form an approximate idea of the kind of man a Genevan was a century or two ago, and we find that he was just about what one could expect—he bore both internally and externally deep marks of Calvin's stamp.

Like Calvin himself, his Genevan successors were absolutely lacking in those evanescent qualities which Frenchmen are in the habit of including in the word "*charme*." He has none of the Frenchman's charming amiability and graciousness, never abandons himself impulsively to feelings of unalloyed sympathy; the constant watchfulness from all quarters under which he lives has taught him to be on his guard; he is in constant fear of being detected in some offence that may bring him under the unpleasant eye of the consistory, and he finds secret pleasure in detecting others. He therefore becomes stiff and reserved and uncommunicative. It is easy to believe Voltaire when he described

Geneva as "une ville triste où tout le monde est de mauvaise humeur."

All Genevans were theologians. While in the salons of Paris the guests entertained each other with the latest theatrical performance or concert, the latest scandal of married life, or the latest philosopher's latest and most sensational paradox, or with other similar worldly subjects, in Geneva the burning theme at their melancholy parties was the latest sermon in St Peter's Church—whether or no the preacher in every respect had spoken consistently with pure orthodoxy, or whether he had said anything offensive. They had developed a marvellous sharpness in all such distinctions, were worthy disputants, and dangerous masters of syllogism like their leader.

The foundation of their theological and religious convictions was Calvin's principle of predestination. Michelet says somewhere that the powerful Genevan community was built upon the rock of predestination. This contributed to giving their manner a fatalistic certainty equal to that of a somnambulist, and this did not tend to make them any more cheerful.

This principle of predestination is also certainly the source, or at any rate one of the chief sources, of the pride and arrogance which all travellers noticed as one of the most striking traits in the Genevan character.

Just as Calvin did not doubt that God the Almighty in His wisdom and from all eternity had chosen him as His special instrument in the struggle for His kingdom—in like manner neither were the Genevans in doubt that they too had been ordained to shine above all others as God's people. Geneva formed the extreme southerly outpost of the evangelical church; surrounded on all sides by great Catholic countries which were eager to extinguish them, they had nevertheless stood their ground, aided by that immovable strength of character which was bred on the principle of predestination, and disciplined by a life of virtue practised for two centuries. They were not like other people; they

were quite unique in their way—uplifted and strengthened by the lofty conviction that their state had realised a great religious idea. They repeated this to each other daily, and from the pulpit the same words came to them again and again—those of the apostle: “You are the holy nation, the chosen people; you are the priests and the kings.” And the whole of the Protestant world encouraged them in this belief. For centuries Geneva was the model state for evangelical followers throughout Europe, the most enlightened witness of the reformed church’s marvellous power of regeneration. So it meant something to be a Genevan.

And it was not only religious but political distinction that lay at the bottom of the Genevan’s nationalism. While the peasants in the neighbouring districts, and the citizens of the small towns of Savoy and Pays de Vaud, were obliged to obey magistrates or squires sent from distant governments (Berne, Turin, or Paris) whose appointments they could not influence in any way—on the other hand the citizens of Geneva were their own masters. Once a-year they assembled in the cathedral and elected their own officers. It is true the power of the people was limited in many ways through indirect vote and other wily arrangements, but though in reality the government was very aristocratic in all essentials, nevertheless the forms always continued democratic; and this was such a rarity in Europe at that time that the Genevan citizens felt justly proud of the real or imagined share they had in the power.

The mere fact that the citizens assembled every year for the elections created a political interest without parallel in that day. Every Genevan had the feelings of a proud republican who had a voice in his country’s fate, and therefore their love for it was based upon different hypotheses from those of the obedient royal subjects of the neighbouring districts.

Although it was difficult for him to break the bonds established by tradition by his vote, he could nevertheless express wishes which the authorities were obliged to con-

sider. Even in the 18th century there was in Geneva a public attitude which it was difficult for the upper classes to ignore. The Genevans submitted to all the control to which they were subjected by the authorities; they appeared before the consistory when they were summoned, allowed themselves to be catechised, made public apologies on their knees when they were so commanded—but, on the other hand, they reserved for themselves the right to exercise control, they were protected by powerful laws, they were stern in their demands for morality, and distinguished gentlemen of the council were continually under their watchful eyes. A syndic who himself did not follow the stern regulations which he prescribed for the small citizens became an impossibility, and, notwithstanding his privileges of birth, was obliged to resign his position. No official was elected for more than one year at a time, and though the voting was indirect, the electors would not have dared to attempt the re-election of officers who had been guilty of any legal offence or had caused any scandal. In this way the power of the citizens of Geneva became something more than imaginary, even though the officials were always chosen from the upper class.

And in addition to this, notwithstanding the strict exclusiveness and sharp class distinctions, there was considerable intercourse between the different strata of society. There were many social grades in the little town. Eugène Ritter, who is thoroughly familiar with the conditions, distinguishes, besides the aristocracy, no less than seven different grades within the bourgeoisie: *la haute bourgeoisie*, *la riche bourgeoisie*, *la bourgeoisie aisée*, *la bourgeoisie lettrée*, *la bonne bourgeoisie*, *la bourgeoisie pauvre*, and *la basse bourgeoisie*.

However, certain displacements might occur within these strata: it sometimes happened that a member of *la haute bourgeoisie* was elected to *le petit conseil*, and thereby both he and his family were promoted to the aristocracy. It

might also happen that a member of *la riche bourgeoisie* would be elected to *le conseil des deux cents*, and thereby his family also advanced to *la haute bourgeoisie*, &c.

The possibilities arising from these displacements gave certain opportunities for political ambition, and helped to increase the political interest of which every Genevan citizen, as controller of a vote, was already in possession. There was always some one who was striving to advance, who was trying to collect a party about him. It was in this way that the habit of animated political debate developed early in Geneva; political criticism and political discontent arose—to speak briefly, an opposition was created.

The Rhone flows through Geneva and divides it into two parts: on the one side lies the “high town,” on the other the “low town.” This is not only a topographical distinction, but also a social one, as the rich and distinguished lived in the upper town, and the poor and unimportant in the lower. Here, too, the discontented ones collected, especially in the St Gervais quarter, where one might hear many growls at aristocratic power. A man who was born in the lower town belonged to the opposition. The lower town was Rousseau’s home, though not his birthplace.

Such were the Genevans: theologians, politicians, and moralists; stern and scrupulous; cavilling disputants; egoistical and supercilious; stiff and unapproachable, suspicious, dissatisfied, critical oppositionists; proud—proud of being Protestants, the most consistent of all Protestants, a shining example to all their sympathisers in Europe and America;—proud of being republicans who had upheld their liberty by heroic struggles against all-powerful enemies.

If we now turn our attention to Rousseau, we shall find many Genevan peculiarities, both lights and shadows—notwithstanding many conspicuous differences. He, too, is reserved, stiff, and unapproachable, always on the watch,

suspicious, fearful that someone will come too near him. Amiel's line—

“Le moi de Genevois ne sommeille jamais”—

fits him also to a quite eminent degree. He has an inborn tendency to see an enemy in every human creature, and his pride has no limits. He ended his life in maniacal terror of persecution, and it is not inconceivable that he had inherited the germs of this disease from a race of people who for centuries had spent their lives under the prying eyes of thousands of spies.

Like all Genevans, Rousseau also was a theologian. Religious questions were chief among his interests, and never ceased to occupy him. It is true he was not an orthodox Calvinist, and he loved to boast of his tolerance; but he, too, had a faith which he was sure was the right one, and his tolerance had its decided limits. To him, as to Calvin, religion appeared as a basis of society, a State matter; his religion did not have many dogmas, but he who sinned against those was, according to Rousseau's way of thinking, doomed to death. In this we see more difference of degree than of kind.

Like his countrymen, Rousseau was a persistent disputant; he had a natural inclination to disagree, and overpowering strength in defending his opinions; he was an indomitable logician, and, like other theologians, did not shrink from artifices and sophisms when he found them necessary. None of his opposers could approach him in polemical power; he overwhelmed them with an army of arguments that he had at his command, and that he brought forth in invincible order of march with a logical precision that one would not have expected from such a lyrical poet.

To Rousseau, as to all other Genevans, theology was of chief interest as the foundation of all morality. He was a moralist above all things. He would have agreed on every point with Beza's statement in his speech at the inauguration of the academy: that science and those arts that do not

lead to moral conduct are evils. All of Rousseau's books, without exception, are moral sermons. His tendency is always moral, whether he is writing treatises or romances, indeed even when he is writing of botany or music. He is always wanting to better the race, and undertakes to do so by casual criticism as well as by definite intent. When he lashes Parisian society, so intellectual and brilliant externally, but so conventional, hypocritical, and frivolous at heart, Geneva, with its simple customs, its unostentatious contentment, its faithfulness in marriage, its moral earnestness, rises before his mind's eye as the background on which the abominations of that modern Babylon stand out with so much more striking distinctness. When he, time and again, praises Spartan simplicity and moral strength, as opposed to the emancipated intellectuality of the wanton Athenians, it is really Paris and Geneva that he is comparing. When he cries woe upon modern culture, with its falsification of the precious things of life, he is really expressing a Genevan moralist's horrified disgust over offences that could never have taken place within the protecting walls of the holy city.

Rousseau is proud of Geneva, of the theological Geneva, of the moral Geneva, of the political Geneva. He dwells with pride on the conversations in which his father tried to inoculate him, in his childhood, "with a free and republican spirit, the indomitable and proud character which will not submit to the yoke of slavery, and which has tormented me all my life." His entire political philosophy is largely built on his childish memories and later studies of the Genevan constitution. He proudly dedicated his treatise on inequality to his Genevan fellow-citizens, the only people who ever succeeded in upholding freedom and equality, when surrounded on all sides by slaves. When he evolved the political ideal he so boldly presents in 'Contrat Social,' it was the Genevan constitution and Genevan conditions that were in his mind.

And the qualities that distinguished him from all his

contemporaries, and which are the essential features of his authorship, were bred in Geneva,—I mean the passionate earnestness with which he defends his opinions, and the religious pathos with which he slings his mighty words in the faces of people accustomed to play with thought, and to see in bold opinions only a piquant stimulant to relieve the monotony of everyday life.

III.

THE FAMILY.

WHILE it is comparatively easy to discover the qualities Rousseau owed to Geneva, it is, on the other hand, an almost insoluble problem to point out conclusively those for which he was indebted to his family. The tangled skein of heredity is so complicated that to attempt to unravel it is often bad policy. Certainly we are all aware of the fact that heredity is something more than fiction; our daily experience and observation tell us over and over again that not only certain facial contours, certain complexions, certain gestures and mannerisms, but also certain spiritual qualities, character, intelligence, peculiar gifts, &c., are to be found in the same family; there is no human creature who does not resemble either his father or his mother, his cousin or his grandparents, or all of them at once. Generally speaking, then, heredity is an indisputable fact; but if, on the other hand, we take a particular example, if we imagine a particular individual as the object of the sharp analysis of his intimate friends, even allowing that they may be the keenest of observers, nevertheless we feel sure that these keen observers will disagree absolutely in their conclusions; if their field of observation is limited to a single characteristic feature, say, the nose, some will insist that he got it from his father's family, others that it came from his mother's—and perhaps both sides are right. The fusion is so complicated, the results of intercrossing so arbitrary, that the more one studies them the more helpless one feels. The Rougon-Macquart

pedigree that Émile Zola constructed and delineated in his novel, 'Une Page d'Amour,' is pure fantasy. The quasi-scientific certainty with which he classifies the physical and spiritual qualities of his consanguineous characters under a systematically-acting schedule of natural law does not bear the stamp of genuine science. We know empirically that there must be a force, whatever we may choose to call it—heredity,—which binds together particular individuals in a family and imprints on them resemblances which distinguish them from other races; but in what this force consists, whether it acts in accordance with law or pure chance,—of this we have not the remotest suspicion. It is only when the object belongs to the simplest form of organic life that modern scientists, by the help of the keenest observations, begin to see a little light; but even this much is so uncertain that heredity, even at this late day, looms before research as an unexplored land, an impenetrable, or at least an unpenetrated, mystery.

As far as Rousseau is concerned, an additional difficulty is that we by no means know enough of his ancestors to be able to draw well-founded conclusions as to his spiritual inheritance. To be sure, I notice that a French physician, G. Sibiril, who has written an otherwise readable treatise on Rousseau's medical experiences,¹ declares that "the recent remarkable works of Louis Dufour, Dufour Vernes, and Eugène Ritter (on Rousseau's family) throw new light on the Genevan philosopher's origin," and "that these interesting investigations help us to a better understanding of Jean Jacques Rousseau's character. For example, they establish the existence of that love of vagabondage (*tendance aux fugues*) which is so conspicuous in him, and which we find in other members of his family."

But when I read through Sibiril's rather long-winded thesis I find no more than this single "for example," this migratory instinct, transmitted from his forefathers, which "throws new light" over Jean Jacques' character. And

¹ *Histoire Médicale de J. J. Rousseau.* Bordeaux, 1900.

this is undeniably somewhat less than one expected. But wait. I must not be unfair. Sibiril has, indeed, produced also a crazy cousin, whose case he describes in detail, and though it does not bear the least resemblance to Rousseau's, nevertheless it can serve as excuse for the statement that there had been a case—though quite a temporary one—of lunacy in the family. But I would answer by asking, is there a single one of us that has not had, or has not got now, a more or less crazy cousin to be distressed over?

Brunetière,¹ who finds it to his purpose to attribute a thoroughly low origin to Rousseau's democratic tendencies, which he hated, used heredity in this way. He wrote: "Not only by their pecuniary circumstances, but by education, taste, and all their habits, Jean Jacques' father and mother, uncles and aunts, and all his relatives, belonged to the lower class in the worst meaning of the term (*au sens le plus facheux du mot*), and during his entire life his vanity found a strange gratification in referring to this. The vulgarity of his origin, and hence of his taste, is Rousseau's chief characteristic, one that distinguishes him from all the other writers of the day, who were without exception bourgeois."

Stated in such a general way we might tolerate this, if it were correct. But it is not by any means. Rousseau's family did not belong to the lower class, but to no other than the bourgeoisie itself,—not exactly the rich or high bourgeoisie, but, on his father's side, to "la bonne bourgeoisie," and on his mother's partly to "la bourgeoisie lettrée." What Brunetière calls Rousseau's vulgar taste was not at all owing to his low origin, but was a result of his own experiences and achievements, which had brought social degradation on him; and when he sometimes boasts of his democratic birth he is thinking of the Parisian aristocracy that surrounds him: there is no lack of occasions when he plumes himself on his good Genevan family.

A few years ago Pierre Lasserre published a brilliant and

¹ *Études Critiques*, 3^e série, p. 259.

sensational book¹ which attempted to prove that the entire nineteenth century suffered from a dangerous disease called romanticism, and that the source of this disease was Jean Jacques Rousseau. It was to Lasserre's purpose to prove the existence of this illness in Rousseau as well as the existence of the genius that made the illness so dangerous and so enormously infectious. Here, too, heredity had to offer its services. "At the bottom of Rousseau's personality," says Lasserre, "and permeating it on every side, there lies a diseased element. This element broke out for the first time after he had reached maturity, becoming more and more serious under the bitterness that accompanies fame and controversy. But it is of importance to emphasise at once the presence of this disease, because Rousseau, even in his youth, is seen in his proper light only on the background of this ruin that was his legacy from his paternal ancestors."

And, a little later: "He received from his mother the lyric talent that he combined with this wretchedness."

Be that as it may, Lasserre certainly is right in saying that Rousseau's soul, even from birth, bore germs both of disease and of genius: whether or not this genius be limited to *le don lyrique*—the lyric talent—is another question, which I shall not discuss until later.

What concerns us here is Lasserre's position in regard to heredity, and on this point I am of the opinion that one can maintain the opposite of what he says with exactly the same justification.

Rousseau's maternal grandfather, Jacques Bernard, at thirty-two years of age died of dissipation, after having filled the Genevan protocols with a succession of erotic scandals. It is natural to look to him for the sources of Jean Jacques' degeneration.

As the only proof that Jean Jacques got his talent from his mother, Lasserre quotes the well-known passage in 'Confessions,' where he speaks of her: "She drew, she sang

¹ *Le Romantisme français: Essai sur la Révolution dans les Sentiments et dans les Idées au XIX^e Siècle.* Paris, 1908.

she accompanied herself on the theorbe (bas-luth), she was well-read, and she wrote poetry." But these are all accomplishments which in those days were very ordinary in daughters of a good house, and which Suzanne Bernard had in common with many other ladies, to whose lot it did not fall to give birth to a Jean Jacques.

On the other hand, we hear of Rousseau's father, Isaac, that he was very assiduous in reading with his son. And we know what it was he read: it was not only La Calprenèdes' and Mme. de Scudery's romances or Molière's comedies. There were also more difficult things: Le Sueur's 'Histoire de l'Église et de l'Empire'; Bossuet's 'Discours sur l'Histoire universelle'; Nani's 'Histoire de Venise'; Plutarch's 'Lives'; La Bruyère's 'Characters'; Fontenelle's book on 'Worlds.'

Without overlooking the fact that Genevan watchmakers were more cultured than watchmakers in other places, one is nevertheless struck by the thought that, even in Geneva, the watchmaker who from intellectual curiosity abandoned himself passionately to the perusal of such works as those I have mentioned, could not have been an ordinary artisan.

One might say (with just as much right as Lasserre had when he defended his assertion) that Rousseau was, like many other great men, at once degenerate and inspired—that he inherited the germs of disease from his mother's race, his genius from his father's,—just the contrary of Lasserre's conjecture.

Nor do I maintain that this is the right conclusion; I only mean that one may be just as correct as the other,—in other words, that we know nothing at all about it.

Louis Ducros¹ (after Ritter) draws attention to the mixture of nationalities that were present in the oldest known branch of the Rousseau family. He argues in this wise: A Frenchman, Didier Rousseau, had married a girl of Savoy. In addition to this, the pair took up their abode in Calvin's Geneva. Now, neither French *legèreté* nor

¹ Jean Jacques Rousseau, De Genève à l'Hermitage (1712-57). Paris, 1908.

Savoyard *vivacité* could have been compatible with the unpleasant Calvinistic discipline, so there were probably many clashes between the couple's original instincts and the life forced upon them from without. These conflicting forces entered into the inheritance of their descendants, who unconsciously felt themselves ill at ease under the struggle between their inclinations and their duties. They ceased to be entirely French, but did not succeed either in becoming real Genevans: their many violations of Genevan morality which the consistory's protocols record give evidence of this.

"This difficulty, that certain of Didier Rousseau's descendants seem to have had in identifying themselves with Genevan character and Genevan morals—does it not cause us to anticipate, and does it not explain in advance, that strange antagonism between the two nationalities in Jean Jacques? He appears to have been too French for the Swiss clergy of his day and too much of a 'citizen of Geneva' for his Parisian friends." This is indeed undeniably quite brilliant, and, besides, sounds also rather plausible; and it must be said, too, to Ducros' honour, that he does not take his conjectures too seriously; he presents them neither with the categorical certainty of Brunetière and Lasserre nor with the rather comical scientific seriousness of the young Dr Sibiril.

And very wisely, too, for, on closer investigation, the beautiful little hypothetical structure helplessly collapses. What Ducros calls Genevan character and Genevan morals are in fact, as we have already learned, by no means peculiar to the original inhabitants of Geneva. On the contrary, it was a quite new attitude, which the Frenchman, Calvin, in the face of incessant opposition, forced on his adopted fellow-citizens, and he could never have succeeded in making this attitude permanent except by constantly importing Frenchmen, who became tools in his hands and dictators of the community's moral tone. The so-called "Genevan" character was produced as a result of a stamp (and

that a French stamp) set upon the Genevan community. And so what becomes of "*le bizarre antagonisme des deux nationalités de Jean Jacques*"?

It is quite true that Jean Jacques was too French for the Genevan clergymen and too Genevan for his Parisian friends. But this was not all the result of the "*bizarre antagonisme*" between his two nationalities, but of causes that are easily found by investigating Jean Jacques' own development, and in regard to which we become no wiser by invoking the shades of great-great-great-grandfather Didier or his attractive Savoyard wife, *Mmè. Miège*.

I have conscientiously studied and made excerpts from the above-mentioned book of Eugène Ritter, who with praiseworthy industry has explored the archives and protocols of the little republic and collected all that can be learned of Rousseau's family on both the father's and the mother's sides. It is by no means tiresome reading; the book is packed full of authentic documents, copies of protocols, wills, marriage and business contracts, &c., all of which assist us to a first hand insight into interesting genealogical conditions. But that which is supposed to be the point of the book, the light that was to be thrown over Rousseau's soul—this undeniably appears to me extremely weak, to speak mildly. I was introduced to, and learned to know a little more intimately, certain personalities from among a number of petty tradesmen—the original ancestor, Didier Rousseau, his son, Jean I., this one's son, Jean II., David I., David II., Isaac—petty tradesmen of the artisan class, watchmakers, printers, tanners;—in addition to these, another collection of Bernard ladies and gentlemen—also, craftsmen, a little more genteel, intermixed with occasional clergymen. Some of these citizens are more virtuous than others and more fortunate, and increase their fortunes almost to the point of prosperity, but then come sons who are careless and have no luck and things go down again; most of them are God-fearing and worthy men, but now and then a black sheep appears—as in most families. A collection of extremely

commonplace people, who hardly give us a single glimpse of information in regard to Jean Jacques Rousseau and his marvellously complex character. Perhaps as a last resort we might grasp at this "tendance aux fugues" of which Sibiril speaks. There were undeniably many of Rousseau's forefathers who found it difficult to remain quietly in one spot, and it may be imagined that he got his Bohemian restlessness from his ancestors, and that the vagabond in him was an inherited quality.

And yet this is not certain either. I happen to be at present engaged in the study of another bird of passage, G. E. Lessing: as is well known, he also spent his entire life in wandering from place to place—from Camenz to Meissen, thence to Leipzig, so to Berlin and thence back to Leipzig; then to Wittenberg and back to Berlin, thence to Breslau and again to Berlin—to Hamburg—to Wolffenbüttel. He had the greatest difficulty in keeping in one place; after a few years in the same town, his soles began to burn under him and he had to depart. He was even more of a gipsy than Rousseau, who, at least, was always longing for peace.

But how about Lessing's forefathers? On both father's and mother's sides, a long line of blameless burgomasters and clergymen, clergymen and burgomasters, settled in life-positions, into whose minds there never entered a thought of flight. According to all laws of inheritance G. E. Lessing should have been pastor primarius, like his father, or assistant schoolmaster, like his brother Theophil, that inoffensive pedagogical light, who burned out in the candlestick he was put in without thought of changing position. In the Lessing family history we seek in vain for the indication of a germ that might have produced that charming Bohemian, Gotthold Ephraim.

We see the law of inheritance is constantly preparing the most unexpected surprises for us; we are always moving about on unsafe ground, to say nothing of the fact that we may run the risk of an April-fooling, as unfortunately it certainly does happen that cuckoo eggs are sometimes laid in

marriage beds. Such was probably the case with Johannes Evald—Johannes Evald, whose religious type of mind one biographer after another has attributed to inheritance from his father, the pious orphanage priest, but who, according to the Danish collector of family history, Bobé, ought not to be called Evald at all, but Valeur.

I abandon the land of these doubtful and uncertain conjectures to look a little more closely at Rousseau's father. He is important for us to learn to know, for in this case it is not a question of doubtful inheritance, but much more of positive and easily proved direct influence. The mother died of puerperal fever shortly after Rousseau was born, so she could not have had any direct influence on him, but only as a picture that his fancy, stimulated by the stories of his father and others, painted. But it was different with the father; he directed, if one may term it so, the son's first steps, and, both by what he did for him and what he did not do, left deep marks on Jean Jacques' soul,—marks which, according to his own account, never became wholly erased. "The influence of the father it would be impossible to overlook and not easy to exaggerate," remarks the English-American, William Hudson, in his entertaining biography of Rousseau.¹

Isaac Rousseau was a watchmaker by trade, as his father David was, and most of his relatives, and, if we can believe Jean Jacques, was clever in his craft. This, however, did not prevent his having other interests and passions in addition: he played the violin, and it amused him much more than filing the tiny watch wheels. One fine day (1694) he abandoned his workshop to become a dancing-master; he formed a partnership with two other dancing-masters, and their contract is still preserved. In one of the paragraphs Isaac inserted, "*qu'il lui sera permis de faire un voyage, lorsque bon lui semblera.*"

A watchmaker who plays the violin and becomes a dancing-master, and who will not bind himself to anything,

¹ Rousseau and Naturalism in Life and Thought. Edinburgh, 1903.

but legally keeps a way open so that he may abandon the whole thing whenever it occurs to him—at one and the same time then, a craftsman, an artist, and a gipsy—this of itself is a very interesting mixture.

However, we do not know whether or not he ever used his permission to travel, or how long he kept up his terpsichorean instruction; it could not have lasted very long, for in all later records he is always mentioned as “horloger.”

The next time we hear of him is in the police-protocol, four years later. He had been in a street disturbance at night—had been abroad with some comrades, making vulgar noises, and thereby had got into a quarrel with some distinguished foreigners, was arrested, fined, and sent to the consistory to get the proper moral overhauling.

According to the evidence found, however, it looks as though Isaac and his comrades were the innocent objects of attack; but their antagonists were fine people, titled Germans and Englishmen, and the government was aristocratic.

The elder Rousseau anyhow seems to have been a fiery and irritable personage, who often came to blows with people. Two years after the story of the street disorder we find his name once more in the protocol of the council; he considered himself to have been insulted by an English nobleman, and had sent him a written challenge. There was a rumour that he had gone outside the city boundary to await his victim. The council enjoined his father to send for him or assume the responsibility of what might take place.

There are several such stories in Isaac's life.

One of his sisters, Theodora, had married Gabriel Bernard, a son of Jacques Bernard, the libertine mentioned in a previous chapter. On this account social intercourse arose between the two families—they lived close by each other, and Isaac Rousseau thus had many opportunities of meeting his brother-in-law's sister, Suzanne. They fell in love with each other, but it was not such a simple matter for them to marry, as her family occupied a position in the social scale a little higher than his.

Rousseau relates in 'Confessions'—

"My mother was rich, wise, and beautiful. It was not without difficulties that my father won her. Their love had begun almost when their lives did; when they were eight years old they walked together every evening on La Treille; at ten they were already inseparable. Sympathy, congeniality of soul, increased the feeling that habit had formed. Both were tender, emotional natures, and waited only for the moment when one of them should reveal the secret, to fall into each other's arms.

"Fate, which seemed to thwart their passion, only contributed to inflaming it still more. The young man, who could not win his love, was wasting away with sorrow; she advised him to go away and try to forget her. He did so, but in vain; he came back more in love than ever, and he found his love true and faithful. After this test, nothing remained but to love each other all their lives; they swore eternal fidelity to each other, and heaven blessed their vows.

"Gabriel Bernard, my mother's brother, fell in love with one of my father's sisters, but she agreed to marry him only on the condition that her brother be allowed to marry the sister. Love arranged everything, and the two weddings took place on the same day."

In this little romance there is, in any case, a certain amount of invention, whether it be that Jean Jacques records a false family tradition or that he fabricated it himself. Gabriel Bernard and Isaac Rousseau by no means celebrated their weddings on the same day. When Isaac led Suzanne to the altar, the 2nd of June 1704, Gabriel and Theodora had already been married almost five years.

We have positive information concerning this in the protocol of the consistory. The fact is that the couple were obliged to marry in a hurry—there was *periculum in mora*. None the less, the bride dared to go to the altar with a crown on her head, which was strictly forbidden under such circumstances. The guilty ones were summoned, given a

serious reprimand, and denied the right of communion until they, after distinct evidences of sincere repentance, were taken into grace again a half-year afterwards. In all probability Rousseau knew nothing of this, and repeated in good faith the story of the double wedding, which family tradition had arranged in order to cover over an old scandal.

It is questionable, also, whether or no we can rely on Rousseau's other reports of his parents' love: at any rate, the story of the extremely immature love-affair, as children, is not probable; it is natural to conclude with Ritter that intimate association did not begin until after the two families had formed a closer connection through Theodora's marriage. On the other hand, we really have no positive facts to prevent our believing Rousseau's assurances of the father's tender and faithful love for his wife. But I must confess that it does not seem like him. Tender—perhaps; but faithful? We know of circumstances in this connection that make us doubtful. I am not thinking of the fact that he married again a year or two after her death—so many model husbands have done this, and besides, Rousseau tells us expressly that when his father, a very old man, died in Secunda's arms, it was with Prima's name on his lips and her image in his heart. But there are other things. Some months after they were married, shortly after the first-born François came into the world, Rousseau *père* took his departure. Jean Jacques mentions it as a very ordinary step: "After the birth of my only brother, my father departed for Constantinople, where he had been called to become watchmaker of the seraglio." He does not make a single remark in this connection, not a hint nor an explanation of why the most tender and faithful of husbands, suddenly, and immediately after becoming a father, abandoned everything and journeyed all the way to Turkey. Nor do we know the reason. Ritter makes some conjectures. As so often, it was the mother-in-law, poor thing! who was accountable. Ritter imagines—for this time he has nothing to confirm his statements—

that old Mme. Bernard had been more opposed to the marriage than the others, and that after it was consummated she continued to torment her son-in-law until he finally became tired of the whole thing and packed his trunk. It is indeed not impossible; for Isaac Rousseau did not come home again until after Mme. Bernard was dead—and yet Constantinople is a pretty long way to flee from a mother-in-law, and we know absolutely nothing about the affair. In all probability money matters played a part too—there were hard times in Geneva in those days, and the watchmaker's art suffered, as their products are of course always articles of luxury to a certain extent. It is true Isaac had got a good bit of money with his wife, though it is an exaggeration of Jean Jacques to call his mother rich; however, she was well-to-do, but Isaac was a high-flier, and it is natural to assume that he got into embarrassments.

As I say, we know nothing, but so much we can say for certain, that the reason of his disconcerting flight from home was not lack of harmony in the home, not strife between the husband and wife, but there was some exterior trouble—difficulties of one kind or another. His "eternal love" for his wife, then, was not so deep but that he fled from her and the new-born son and business and everything, as soon as difficulties announced themselves. He gave his wife power of attorney, and seemed to think that thereby everything was arranged.

In this we see one of the elder Rousseau's most conspicuous characteristics—he could not endure difficulties. As long as it was possible he shut his eyes to them, but when they were no longer avoidable he fled. He never faced difficulties squarely like a man; he did not undertake to struggle with them; he did not make the very least effort to conquer them, but simply went his way—to another place where they were not to be found. He was absolutely without any feeling of responsibility, he lacked character, he allowed himself to be driven as circumstances dictated,

without making the least attempt to direct the course of his own life. Jean Jacques tells quite naïvely of many of his father's actions, without realising that these actions absolutely destroy the ideal picture he wants his readers to have—the picture of his tender, good, faithful, gallant, brave and, at the bottom of his heart, deeply religious father. The cause of this strange naïveté in Jean Jacques, who otherwise saw clearly enough, was probably the fact that he himself was pretty much of this same stamp. Neither had he any particular feeling of responsibility, nor was he at all inclined to enter into a struggle with the difficulties of life; his life, too, for many years drifted without a rudder. He failed to see the disparaging side of all the evidences he gives of his father's unbelievable frivolity and egoism, and therefore he does not seem to suspect the way in which these reports must influence his readers.

But let us come back to Isaac. The cause of his suddenly leaving his family in the lurch was simply that he came into contact with some difficulties that he was incapable of facing. But this only explains why he left, not why he went all the way to Constantinople. Just remember what it must have meant to travel in those days. But I believe that this is explained in the light of certain other characteristics of the elder Rousseau. From what his son tells us, he was somewhat of a Don Quixote, somewhat of a fantast, and somewhat of an adventurer. He was no coward: although weak of character, he was physically brave at any rate. I have mentioned how quick he was to take up a quarrel when he felt himself insulted—there is more of that sort of thing in the protocols of Geneva. The long, long voyage with its unforeseen dangers and adventures seemed by no means terrifying to him; on the contrary, that was the chief attraction of the whole thing;—and so the goal—Constantinople. The very name, Constantinople, the distant and the strange, must have given wings to his fantasy. I imagine that he went about dreaming of this for a time until it became irresistible.

Six mortal years was he gone; he took his departure in June 1705, and did not come home again until the autumn of 1711, when he again took up his vocation in La Grande Rue. Suzanne had remained true to him. "Her beauty, her wit, her talents made her the object of much homage," relates the son; "but she had more than her virtue with which to defend herself, for she loved her husband tenderly." How his faithfulness fared in the six long years in the Turkish capital—the son does not mention this. I must confess that I have my doubts.

Finally, however, he came back.

"She urged him to return. He abandoned everything and came home. I was the sad fruit of this reunion. Ten months afterwards I was born, ill and weak; I cost my mother her life, and my birth was the first of my misfortunes."

IV.

THE HOME.

ONE who wishes to secure information about Rousseau's childhood in order to seek the early germs of the genesis of his soul can do no better than study the first book of 'Confessions.' It is quite true that Rousseau's narration is not without faults—errors which Swiss industry has succeeded in pointing out by reference to other sources; but in the first place these errors are not numerous, and in the next place they are, as a rule, quite insignificant, as far as the points that are of importance for us are concerned. I have already mentioned that Rousseau had been erroneously informed when he had been given the impression that his uncle and his father had married on the same day. It is also incorrect for him constantly to refer to the clergyman Samuel Bernard as his mother's father—he was his granduncle (the brother of his maternal grandfather); and in another place his memory fails him on rather a serious chronological point, in that he allows a period of time in his life, which in reality has been proved to cover only a few months, to stretch over two or three years.

Much more important than these small errors in purely external facts are the psychological anachronisms, if I may term them so, under which the narration necessarily suffers. Rousseau began to write his 'Confessions' when he was more than fifty years old, and he had not a single record to rely on, not a creature to control him, and, as far as the time we are speaking of is concerned, not a letter in which

to seek information. Under these circumstances we cannot do otherwise than admire the certainty and clearness with which his memory has preserved a large number of pictures full of lifelike details, and the intimacy with which he is able to enter into the feelings and moods of forty years before.

But on the other side we must say to ourselves that it is impossible that Rousseau's memories can be fully accordant with his experiences. The human soul is not a phonograph. At its best it is not able, after the lapse of many years, to reproduce impressions in an unchanged form. The human soul is an organism, and as such is obliged, in the course of time, quite unconsciously, to remodel the content of memory, to reshape it under the influence of later psychological experience.

That this, which is generally applicable, is also the case with Rousseau's memory can be proved without great difficulty on many points. Let us limit ourselves to the first book—the childhood memories—which are the only ones that concern us for the moment. While reading these, one is possessed the whole time by the spontaneous feeling that these narrations would have had quite a different aspect if they had been recorded simultaneously with the experiences or at an earlier stage of Rousseau's development. Every line contains biased considerations and judgments that make us think of the author of 'Héloïse,' 'Émile,' 'Contrat Social.' Although Rousseau, in speaking of his early reading of Plutarch, tells us that it was this reading, in conjunction with his father's conversation, that made him the proud republican he was, we are justified in doubting this, and in assuming that the six-year-old boy could not have been a proud republican, though we may grant that these memories, in later years, may have been an active ferment in shaping the social views of the political disputant. In like manner we find it difficult to believe Rousseau, when he tells of the ten-year-old boy's æsthetic joy in Nature, when at Bossey; such feelings are incon-

ceivable in a boy of that age and undoubtedly were imaginary conceptions, involuntarily evolved by that worshipper of Nature, the author of 'La Nouvelle Héloïse.' And finally, there are several places in the first book of 'Confessions' where we recognise the educational reformer, who vitiates the picture of the boy's early training by throwing on it the misleading light of pedagogical theories acquired much later. In short, these childish memories do not, and cannot, give a clear picture of his psychological experiences in their original state, but only as they had become involuntarily shaped in the mature man's mind.

But, in addition to these unconscious deceptions, we find those that are conscious, intentional. Certainly there cannot be found in the entire literature of the world an autobiography that is not, at the same time, an apology. It makes no difference how much one may strive to be sincere and objective, the moral tendency toward self-defence is always too strong; in every man's life there are things he would prefer to have left undone, which he would like to hide, or at least to excuse, and thus he is led, perhaps contrary to his original intention, wittingly and wilfully, to manage the lights so that they are not unfavourable to him. Now, in the case of Rousseau, this finds expression in a rather complicated manner. We remember the proud words with which he prefaces 'Confessions':—

"I have formed a plan which has no precedent, and the execution of which will never find an imitator. I shall show my fellow-creatures a man in all his naked truth—and that man is *myself*. Let the bell of doomsday toll when it will, I shall appear before the Highest Judge with this book in my hand. And I shall say in a loud voice: 'See what I have done, what I have thought, what I have been. I have not hidden the bad nor exaggerated the good—I have shown myself as I was, contemptible and miserable at one time; good, noble, sublime, at another; I have unveiled my innermost depths such as Thou Thyself hast seen them. Eternal Being, assemble about me the innumerable host of my

fellow-creatures—let them hear my confessions, let them sigh over my unworthiness, let them blush over my paltriness; but then let all of them unveil their hearts at the foot of Thy throne with the same sincerity—and then let one of them say, if he dare, I was better than this man.’”

Rousseau kept his word—sometimes better than we might have wished; he leads us through the darkest and foulest ways of his diseased soul with disconcerting sincerity, and honours us with a confidence which sometimes weighs heavily on our spirits. And yet you will surely have noticed that even in these words of introduction he betrays his apologetic intentions: “And let one of them say, if he dare, I was better than this man.”

This is the real object of ‘Confessions.’ He wishes to be sincere, but not gratis; he will confess—confess to the very last shred—and he adopts the whole world as Father Confessor with unheard-of audacity; but in return he demands the righteous wages of the confession—absolution. And he will have in recompense, without any haggling, the greatest reward conceivable, for he expects the confession to make evident that, in spite of everything, a better creature than its author has never lived. The entire narration is arranged with an eye to this conclusion, and with great ingenuity,—a cunning procedure, and one often needs the keen glance of suspicion in order to detect that a piece of skilful advocacy is being conducted. Apparently he relates his experiences quite objectively and indifferently, but as a rule they are presented in a form so dexterously useful to his object that one lays down the book with the distinct impression that this poor Jean Jacques was always really more to be pitied than reproached.

‘Confessions,’ like all of Rousseau’s writings, is based on the assumption that man is good by nature but becomes depraved by social environment. This is not least conspicuous in the book with which we are now concerned, the first book of ‘Confessions.’ He himself is used as the example; he is by nature affectionate and friendly, open

and good; evil comes from without, is forced on him by others. If this and that had not happened, he would have been quite another man. This *tabula rasa* theory of the eighteenth century, the belief that the human soul comes into the world without tendencies—an uninscribed table—and that its content is determined exclusively by what is engraved on it from without,—this belief has no longer any adherents. We know now that no creature is born without predisposition, and no matter how much significance one allows training and other experiences, one must admit that the final personality is essentially determined by its original inherent worth. In reading ‘Confessions’ we obtain many important glimpses of Rousseau’s original personal equipment, and, no matter how much he attempts to give the impression that it was circumstances that decided his fate, we cannot be blind to the fact that his own nature, his own spiritual qualities, his own weaknesses and his own strength, were in a high degree responsible for the result which he hypocritically characterises as so purely tragic.

You see that ‘Confessions’ is a rich source of information, and almost the only one as far as his childhood is concerned: we find here and there in Rousseau’s other writings occasional remarks that refer to this period—in the preface to the treatise on ‘Inequality,’ in ‘La Nouvelle Héloïse,’ in ‘Émile,’ in letters to Malesherbes, in ‘Rêveries,’—but they are either only repetitions or elaborations of what is to be found in ‘Confessions,’ and they neither contradict ‘Confessions’ nor extend our knowledge on any essential point. And there exists no other source—no contemporary who knew him in his childhood, no letter from, or to, or about him.

Practically speaking, then, it is the only source, and, as I have said, it is a rich one, but, at the same time, as we have seen, a dangerous one, that must be consulted with the greatest prudence. It is necessary to separate the facts, the real experiences and trials, from those that are the product of later voluntary and involuntary fabrication—to withdraw

the false bias, suppress the misleading elucidations, obliterate the apologetic tendency. In this way one may extract, at any rate, some of the elements of which Rousseau's childish soul was composed, and point out some of the influences which became significant in his development.

It is obvious that one cannot come to any exact result by this means; one has only one's common-sense to operate with, and that is, as we know, an extremely deficient implement. It is true also that 'Confessions' has been read and is still read to-day in many different ways: some have seen a monster in it, others an angel; some have discovered that the love of truth is his strongest passion, others that he was a hysterical hypocrite; some consider him a tragic victim of the machinations of faithless friends, others look upon him as an unbearable wrangler, with whom no well-behaved person would continue very long on friendly terms; some see in him a much too tender soul, hungering after the love of uncomprehending creatures; others turn from him as from an egregious egoist, who understands how to cover up his boundless vanity with smooth words. And every one of these readers secures the colours for his picture from Rousseau's own confessions.

We must admit that 'Confessions' is a rich source in many respects. It is certainly rich in possibilities of interpretation.

Even the actual facts of his childhood have been the subject of extremely dissimilar opinions; but it would be much too protracted an undertaking to discuss them here. I have consulted most of those who have written on the subject, and have picked up clues here and there, but the essential foundation of the picture of Rousseau's childhood which I shall now present to you is found in his own utterances, first and foremost in the first book of 'Confessions'—tested by the grain of common-sense that I may possess.

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As I have before mentioned, Rousseau's mother died shortly after he was born. After this irreparable loss, his father's

sister, Suzanne Rousseau, took up her abode in the house. Jean Jacques had come into the world weak and feeble; there was little hope that he would live, but Aunt Suson's untiring care saved him. She was well assisted by Jacqueline, his young nurse, who with his aunt kept a secure place in his affectionate memory during his entire life. He even forgave these loving souls for saving his life.

With these three—the father, aunt Suson, and Jacqueline—Jean Jacques grew up, practically speaking, as an only child, for the brother, François, was seven years older, and naturally had little to do with him; besides, it appears that no one seemed to care anything for François—he was more or less neglected until one fine day he went to the dogs.

It was not that sentiment was lacking in this house; it was only a little unevenly distributed, so that the elder son got no share of it. Jean Jacques was only all the more spoiled. His father could not look at him without an attack of emotion, because he always reminded him so sadly of his beloved Suzanne who was no more. "Every time he took me in his arms, I guessed from his sighs, from the violence with which he pressed me to him, that bitter longings were mingled with his caresses—which made them no less tender. He often said to me: 'Jean Jacques, let us talk of your mother,' and when I answered, 'Shall we weep again, dear father?'—these words were enough to bring tears to his eyes. 'Alas,' he would say, and sigh, 'give her back to me, assuage the longing that has been in my soul since she left us. Do you think I would be so fond of you if you were only *my* son?'"

Jean Jacques was not sent to school; he was not allowed to go on the street and play about with other children; he lived exclusively with grown-up people, two emotional women and a sentimental man.

Every evening after supper he sat with his father and read aloud to him; they read volume after volume of the favourite authors of the day—La Calprenède and d'Urfé, and they, father and son, entered so passionately into this enjoy-

ment that they often did not go to bed until reminded of the lateness of the hour by the morning song of the birds. Jean Jacques was six years old when they began this habit, which initiated his childish fancy into the exciting secrets of heroic adventures and love affairs as found in these voluminous romances; and it is notable that at first this was his only mental nourishment. He himself expresses his opinion of the results of this pedagogical method thus: "In a short time I had acquired, by this method, not only a tremendous ease in reading and comprehending, but also an insight into the passions quite unique in one of my age. I had still no clear idea of things; even after I knew of the existence of certain feelings and passions, I understood nothing—I felt everything. All of the obscure emotions which I underwent, one after another, did not succeed in leading my reason astray, for I still did not have any, but they formed in me intelligence of a peculiar character and gave me wonderful and romantic impressions of life of which experience and reflection have never quite been able to cure me."

After a year or two these romances were replaced by more solid reading. However, one must not think that this step was in any way owing to a plan formed by Isaac Rousseau, who, while interested in intellectual things, was only half-cultured; it was due to pure chance. The fact was there were no more romances in the bookcase at home, but the clergyman Samuel Bernard, Jean Jacques' granduncle, died, and Isaac inherited a number of his books. It is also doubtful whether or not this half-learned literature can be considered any more beneficial for children than the romances; but under any circumstances, it is remarkable that Jean Jacques at the age of eight years was capable of enjoying such historical expositions as those of Le Sueur's on the church and the empire, such long-winded historical considerations as Bossuet's speculations on the history of the world, such detailed investigations in psychology as La Bruyère's 'Characters.' It is scarcely an exaggeration when

he calls this taste "rare et peut-être unique à cet âge," nor did it leave particularly deep marks on his mind; his favourite book, which he read over and over again, was Plutarch's 'Lives,' and they did not succeed, as he himself said, in "curing him of romances at all," but rather only led him farther along the paths to which La Calprenède and d'Urfé had ushered him. They over-nourished his passions and inflamed his fancy; he imagined himself Agesilaus, Brutus, and Aristides, lived in Athens and Rome, far from the reality that surrounded him; his eyes beamed with delight over his heroes, and he talked in a bass voice in order to seem brave. One day at the dinner-table, when he was relating the story of Scævola, he became so excited and had entered so thoroughly into the character that he put his hand on a pan of live coals to show how the proud Roman had conducted himself.

Such things would not have been dangerous in themselves if there had been anything to counterbalance their influence, but there was none.

Whenever the boy was not with his father revelling in the golden glory of an imaginary world he was with Aunt Suson. The never-to-be-forgotten Aunt Suson! "Her cheerfulness, her friendliness, her pleasant face made such a lasting impression on me that I see her before me now—her glance, her figure, her movements; I remember every one of her caresses; I could say what sort of clothes she wore, how she arranged her hair, not forgetting the little black curls on her temples." And he remembers her sweet voice, and even in his old days might catch himself humming with his rusty voice one of her many dear old songs, the tears streaming from his eyes the while:—

"Tircis je n'ose
écouter ton chalumeau
sous l'ormeau
car on en cause
déjà dans notre hameau."

Yes, Aunt Suson was certainly good and kind enough;

but she naturally could not offer any counterbalance to the emotionalism of the romances and of his father, the tearful widower.

In the midst of this soft environment it is refreshing to hear Jean Jacques relate a little story which gives evidence of the fact that the house was not absolutely lacking in humour:—

One evening he was made to go to bed without supper on account of some boyish mischief-making. As he went through the kitchen, he saw the roast on the spit—and it smelt so tempting! The others sat round the hearth, and he had to go to each one of them in turn to say good-night. When the round was made, he cast a glance on the delicious roast and could not withstand bowing politely to it also and saying in a miserable tone: “Good-night, roast!” His sally was received with much amusement, and he got permission to stay and eat supper with the others.

On this occasion, too, we see that his desire was gratified, and it was probably always thus; he was allowed to do just as he pleased.

In a certain passage, thinking of his youth and home, he calls himself “un enfant chéri, mais jamais un enfant gâté.” But what he himself tells most decidedly contradicts this. “No one ever forced me, no one ever crossed my will”—such and similar expressions come constantly from his pen when he speaks of this period. He uses these modes of expression in commendation of his father and aunt, but we cannot be blind to the fact that they contain certain evidences of the most dangerous spoiling.

“The only thing my parents bequeathed me was a feeling heart,” he says in one place; he should have added—and a diseased fantasy. The boy’s sentimentality was well fed by the treatment he received, and the unhealthy day-dreaming he indulged in was over-encouraged; but on that point in which nature had less generously equipped him—strength of will—he was greatly neglected.

Isaac Rousseau, who all his life avoided unpleasant-

nesses and fled from difficulties, was not the man to help his son to attain that poise to which his own nature was unsympathetic. He had never controlled himself and had never understood the value of self-control. The only meaning that the conception, will, had for him was as identical with his own desire; the only kind of freedom he appreciated was freedom from trouble. Like father, like son. One finds Jean Jacques constantly referring to his "dislike of being inconvenienced," and remembering with pleasure only what he learned "without difficulty." In that training which Rousseau praises so highly, there was no place for struggles, for victories, or for difficulties overcome.

If we wish to form a conception of Jean Jacques as he was at ten years of age, when a beneficial change in the conditions of his life took place, we must think of him as precocious and over-mature in many respects, but, in other ways, younger than his years. He had read much and dreamed much, and, in his way, felt much, but, up to this time, had not exercised his will at all, and had no conception of what it means to make an effort. When he was among grown people he felt confidently at ease and freely unburdened his artificially inflamed heart, but, on the other hand, with boys of his own age he was embarrassed and did not know how to act. He had always been spared the thrusts of life, even those that children are in the habit of receiving and that do them no harm; hence he was all the more sensitive to hostile contact from without. For him, life consisted in a kind father, who often wept; a tender aunt, who sat peacefully and embroidered or sang lovely songs; a nurse, who carried out all his wishes; and—most important of all—many brave knights who sacrificed everything for their lady-loves, and great Greeks and Romans, who sacrificed everything for their countries. This was real life to him.

However, as has been hinted, this idyllic life came to a sudden end.

Isaac Rousseau became once more involved in a quarrel; one day—it was the summer of 1722—he went out shooting. When about to cross an unmowed field, the owner appeared and forbade his doing so. Isaac became furious and levelled his gun at his antagonist; however, he did not shoot, so nothing came of it that time. But some time afterwards Rousseau met the same man (Gautier) in the street, stopped him, and stared impertinently in his face; they came to blows, whereupon Rousseau drew his sword and cut the other across the face.

He was summoned, but did not appear. The police went to his house to carry him off to prison, but the bird had flown and was safe beyond the republic's boundaries—not many steps distant.

Jean Jacques relates this story in his way :—Gautier was a vulgar, impertinent creature; he was not really wounded, but his nose bled a little and he made use of the fact in order to avenge himself. This was not difficult for him, as he had several relatives in the council. “My father insisted that if he was to be cast into prison, the complainant also should be imprisoned, in accordance with the law. As he could not gain this object, he preferred to leave Geneva and expatriate himself for the rest of his life rather than give in in a matter that he considered concerned his honour and liberty.”

Well, it is all the same to us how the affair turned out or who was right, Isaac Rousseau or Gautier; the point is that, in October 1724, Rousseau left home, just as he had done twenty years before, when he went to Constantinople; but this time he never came back. He settled in a little town in the Pays du Vaud, about seven miles from Geneva, and remained there the rest of his life. His home was broken up, and there was an end to the influence that the family had exercised on Jean Jacques. This was not any great misfortune. François, the elder son, who was watchmaker's apprentice, was placed with a new master, from whom he

shortly afterwards fled, to disappear for ever. The careful father resigned the younger son to his brother-in-law, Gabriel Bernard, who, however, kept him only ten days. He then sent him and his own son Abraham to the country, to Bossey, where they were to receive all necessary schooling and training in the house of Lambercier—the clergyman there. Rousseau was at that time ten years old.

V.

AMONG STRANGERS.

THE rectory at Bossey became for Jean Jacques, in many ways, the scene of the continuation of the idyl that had been so abruptly cut short in the house of his father. Rousseau, writing his 'Confessions' in the decline of life, can hardly tear himself away from the dear memories connected with this spot: "As old age approaches, I feel as though these memories are being renewed, while others are becoming obliterated; they have burned themselves into my soul—a flood of details that become more vivid and dearer for every day that passes; I feel as though I must seize them from the very beginning and hold them fast, now that life is about to escape from my grasp. The very smallest incidents from that time are dear to me, simply because they are from that time. I remember every spot, every person, every hour. I see the housemaid and the serving-man going about their work; a swallow flies in through the window, a fly alights on my hand while I study my lessons. Our room with its every piece of furniture appears vividly before my eyes; M. Lambercier's office with the copper-prints of all the Popes, the barometer, the big calendar; the raspberry bushes in the high garden behind the house darkening the windows, even climbing through them."

According to Rousseau's account, both Lambercier and his sister were affectionate creatures, who were not too stern with the spoiled boy. His studies were not burdensome, so,

in spite of his aversion to effort (*aversion pour la gêne*), he remembers his school-hours with the pastor without displeasure. It is true that he did not learn much from him, "but what I did learn was without difficulty, and therefore I have not forgotten any of it."

Here also he experienced the joys of youthful companionship for the first time; he and his cousin, Abraham Bernard, became inseparable—in work as in play,—and Jean Jacques cannot find words sufficiently tender when he refers to this heartfelt boyish friendship, which unfortunately ended so much too early.

The forty-year-old¹ Mlle. Lamercier was a mother to the boys, and Jean Jacques' only thought was to behave to her satisfaction so as to reap the pleasure of her approval.

Life at Bossey was, it seems, almost a paradise, and in Rousseau's description there is, at first, hardly the suspicion of a cloud that might have cast a shadow on the idyl.

But Jean Jacques, without being aware of it, lived over a volcano—his own nature. One fine day the outburst came, and, as it so often does, in connection with the awakening of the sexual life. In Rousseau's case, this took place in an abnormal way—both abnormally early and abnormal in the manner in which it expressed itself.

Although Mlle. Lamercier was affectionate and mild in her discipline, she nevertheless did not always let the boys off without punishment; she had often threatened them with a spanking in the traditional manner, and one day she put her threat into execution. Rousseau went with fear and shame to receive his chastisement, but a strange experience ensued, for mingled with the pain and the shame, he felt the presence of a strong element of sensual satisfaction, which made the occurrence enjoyable and one that became to him something to be desired—he wished to be naughty again so as to bring the same punishment on himself, but his love and respect for Mlle. Lamercier checked him until one day he attained his wish against his will. But, in the

¹ Rousseau says she was thirty, but this is incorrect.

meantime, Mlle.'s suspicions had been aroused. She removed the boys from her room where they had heretofore slept, and, afterwards, treated them as big boys, no longer subject to childish methods of punishment.

This experience was of moment to Rousseau—according to what he himself says, decisive—"for my tastes, for my desires, for my passions—for my whole life." His erotic nature, as we have seen, showed undoubted signs of disease on its first appearance, and never became quite healthy and natural. His inflamed imagination long after he was grown reproduced over and over again similar situations. The strength of his love for a woman was always proportional to the degree of punishment she meted out to him. "To fall on my knees before an imperious mistress, to obey her behests, to beg her forgiveness—those were great joys for me."

This is a well-known and very usual form of sexual psychosis; Krafft-Ebing calls it masochism (after Sacher-Masoch), and defines it in words practically synonymous with those I have just used in describing Rousseau's case. He cites a number of cases observed, and includes Rousseau among his masochistic patients; his parallels are so obvious and so numerous that we cannot doubt the correctness of his diagnosis. He relies on Rousseau's auto-observations in this respect, but does not agree with him in considering Mlle. Lamercier's punishment as the cause of his aberrations; it simply gave the first opportunity for their display: Rousseau was a born sexual psychotic subject.

After having made this, his first serious and difficult confession, he heaves a sigh of relief: "I have taken the first and the most painful step in the dark and foul labyrinth of my confessions." Indeed it must undeniably have been excessively painful to confide such a thing to the whole world—and it has been far from agreeable to refer to it; the easiest thing would certainly have been to omit it, but when one is seeking an insight into a man's soul, it is meaningless to shut one's eyes to any of the elements that

are of vital importance and that he himself considers of decisive moment in his life.

Without defending the doubtful doctrine so common, latterly, among psychologists and psychiatrists—the doctrine of a constant relation between degeneracy and genius—we may admit that the illuminating circumstance of Jean Jacques' coming into the world as a psychotic subject is of the greatest interest to our theme.

The soul of a man, who carries latent disease in his vital roots, cannot escape bearing marks of it in many ways. In the light of the knowledge we have of Rousseau's boy-soul, we can imagine that the discovery he made must have been unusually dangerous in his case. His already overwrought fancy was given new and rich materials with which to occupy itself, all the more dangerous because encompassed by a secret terror which only inflamed his imagination the more. Rousseau repeats over and over again, during the course of his life, that one of the strongest elements in his nature was a sense of shame; it caused him to lie, to flee from the society of his fellow-men; it made him uncertain in social intercourse, it was the motive of numerous acts that were, otherwise, antagonistic to his nature. I imagine that this exaggerated embarrassment sprang originally from his perversity. It is easily conceivable that a man of conspicuously sensitive disposition, who goes about with the humiliating consciousness that he is different from other people—it is easily conceivable, I say, that the feeling of spiritual deformity in this man can help to deprive him of the poise that is the criterion of health. I believe that this inherent defect had a share in determining or, at least, in increasing a number of qualities that, in the course of time, came to characterise Rousseau's spiritual life,—his fantasticalness, his sentimentality, his longing for solitude, his misanthropy, his suspiciousness: indeed it is by no means improbable that the maniacal fear of persecution, in which he ended his days, may not have had one of its roots in the diseased soil of his inherited vices.

Of course the influence of this grew and ramified, little by little, as the years went by. In the meantime the rectory idyl continued seemingly undisturbed. It was an experience of quite another kind that put an end to its glories—one which also gives us a glimpse of Rousseau's nature, and which we must therefore look into a little.

One day Jean Jacques sat alone in his room, which was next to the kitchen, studying his lessons. The maid had left Mlle. Lambercier's combs on the hearth to dry, and when she came for them it seemed that in one of the combs a number of teeth were broken. As no one else had been in that part of the house, Jean Jacques was blamed. He denied being the culprit, but probabilities were too strongly against him; both the clergyman and his sister attacked him rather harshly and urged him to confess. It was of no avail that he repeated he had not touched the comb. They took the matter up seriously: sent for Uncle Bernard. Cousin Abraham had also done something wrong, and got his share of the punishment. It was a dreadful time, but they could not force a confession from the boy, which, however, did not prevent the grown people from still looking upon him as the guilty one.

To his description of this experience Rousseau adds a number of observations: "Imagine a character, ordinarily timid and docile, but in passion violent, proud, and indomitable; a child who had always been directed by the voice of reason, always treated with mildness, justice, friendliness, who had no conception of injustice—imagine his being obliged to accept such dreadful unfairness, and from the very people for whom he had the greatest love and respect. What a subversion of all his ideas! What disorder in his feelings! What a revolution (*bouleversement*) in his heart, in his brain, in the whole of his little intellectual and moral being!"

He proceeds to relate how he and his cousin lay the whole night convulsively embracing each other: "We were almost stifled with sobs, and when we now and then felt

relieved enough to be able to give expression to our resentment, we raised ourselves in bed and screamed hundreds of times with all our might, 'Carnifex, carnifex!'"

His pulse beats faster now at the recollection—more than forty years afterwards. "This first experience of violence and injustice is so deeply graven on my heart that the scene is constantly rising before me." He cannot read of a tyrant's cruelty, or see an animal mishandled, without having the memory of this childish injury rise before his mind's eye with all the cutting intensity of the actual experience.

"This marked the end of the innocent peace (*sérénité*) of my childhood. From that moment my pure joy was over, and I feel to this very day that the memory of the joys of my childhood (*les charmes de mon enfance*) stops here."

Several biographers who have written of Rousseau treat this episode as an empty declamatory performance; others interpret it as evidence of his diseased and inflamed mind; they say that a healthy boy would have been irritated at the moment, but would soon have forgotten the whole affair. Now I am not so sure of this. Of course there is a little pure declamation in Rousseau's story, and probably at the time there was a good deal of excited exaggeration; a quite ordinary boy would have taken it more lightly, and I am sure that Abraham Bernard would never have unaided taken it into his head to shout "Carnifex! carnifex!" This was something he had got from Rousseau, who had a gift for stage effects. But in reality there is neither anything improbable nor anything particularly unsound in Rousseau's experience. I think that we grown people are too quick to undervalue the depth and strength of childish impressions. I know a man of a most peaceful turn of mind who always involuntarily clenches his fist whenever he passes a teacher who more than forty years ago whipped him for a prank of which he was not guilty, and obstinately accused him of being a liar because he would not confess.

It appears to me, then, as not particularly improbable that this first experience of ill-treatment really did bring about a

crisis in Jean Jacques' childish views of life ; but at the same time I believe that the source of his justifiable anger was not quite so pure and noble as he would have us believe. That this injustice offended him as deeply as it did is perhaps due not alone to his feelings of justice, but just as much to his egoism. There are people, even boys, whose sense of justice is just as wide awake as Rousseau's, but who would perhaps take things more lightly, just because they themselves were concerned ; but in his soul his sense of self was certainly one of the dominating characteristics, and heretofore it had had permission to grow without hindrance ; no mighty will had ever crossed it, no necessity of life had ever bent it, and, therefore, at the first serious collision with a harsh and unfair world it rebelled with such a violence that the collision resulted in somewhat of a crisis. The sense of self runs like a powerful stream through the whole of Rousseau's life, indeed also through his work : his unreasonable testiness with friends, his eternal mounting guard to prevent any one's coming too near to him, his protest against all binding forms, his rebellion against every authority,—these are all results of the overweening sense of his own ego which possessed him, and which demanded the right of unimpeded expansion in all directions ; a feeling which he has most certainly in common with the majority of pronounced personalities and great geniuses, but which, nevertheless, in him assumed unusual, not to say abnormal, dimensions. I believe that it was first and foremost this egoism that was roused when he was unjustly accused by the Lamberciers. When in reaction he set heaven and earth in movement, it was not so much because an injustice had been perpetrated, but because it had been perpetrated on him ; and as we are investigating the spiritual origin of a man whom I venture to describe as the father of modern individualism, I find that it is not without significance to refer to this.

In the meantime, Rousseau and his cousin remained at Bossey several months longer. Apparently life went on as before, but in reality things were quite changed. "Affection,

respect, confidence no longer bound us to our teachers; we no longer looked upon them as gods who could read our hearts; we were less ashamed of doing wrong; we began to be secretive, to plot together, to lie. It was a complete *débâcle*." It was not long before Uncle Bernard sent for them to come home, and they left without drawing a sigh at parting.

Uncle Bernard had apparently no desire to keep the boy with him. On the whole, he managed to acquit himself lightly of the burden that his brother-in-law had laid on his shoulders; the question with him was to get rid of his charge as soon as possible, so he looked about for a way to dispose of him. A short time after his home-coming¹ from Bossey Jean Jacques was placed in a clerk's office where he was to prepare himself to become a solicitor (*grapignan*). But this arrangement was unsuccessful; the truth was, he had never learned to work, and he found the sedentary life of desk-work extremely tiresome. The "punctuality," the "submissiveness" (notice the words!), demanded of him aroused rebellious feelings in him, and his hatred of the office grew day by day. As one could expect, the dissatisfaction was mutual. Masseron was constantly complaining of his laziness and stupidity, and after a short time he was ignominiously dismissed on account of his helpless incompetence.

Immediately after he was apprenticed to a certain Ducommun, an engraver. In the contract, which is preserved, we find this passage: "During that period (five years) M. Du Commun promises to teach the aforementioned Rousseau, apprentice, the art of engraving, without hiding anything from him, in so far as the aforementioned apprentice is cap-

¹ There is a chronological error in Rousseau's reference to this period in 'Confessions.' "De retour en Genève, je passai deux ou trois ans chez mon oncle, en attendant qu'on résolut ce que l'on ferait de moi." But Ritter has proved that Rousseau was still in Bossey in August 1724, and that the contract with Ducommun is dated April 26, 1725. Here we have a difference of eight months at the most, from which we must subtract the time spent at Masseron's.

able of understanding it; he engages, also, to provide the aforementioned apprentice with board and lodging during the time mentioned, and to rear him and instruct him in good morals and the fear of God, as beseems the father of a family."

This "paterfamilias" was not more than twenty years old, and—if one can believe Rousseau, and we have, in this case, every reason for doing so—he was very little fitted, on account of other qualities, to rear and instruct anybody "in good morals and the fear of God," least of all a boy of Jean Jacques' character.

"My master," he writes, "was a coarse and violent man, who in a very short time succeeded in casting a shadow over my radiant childhood and in dwarfing my gay and loving nature. . . . My Latin, my classic studies, my history, —all were forgotten for a long time; I did not even remember that there had been Romans in the world. When I, from time to time, visited my father, he no longer recognised his idol; . . . the lowest tastes, the shabbiest tricks, now replaced my former innocent pleasures."

And he goes on to describe in detail the story of his moral downfall—the slight shrinking he felt before he could make up his mind to his first theft, the ease with which he continued to steal when the first step had been taken; soon no object he desired was safe from his long fingers; his vileness increased from day to day; he soon became a past-master in dissimulation, in hypocrisy, in deception; he lived in constant fear and filled with feelings of revenge towards his associates; he was attracted by bad company, whom he joined in the scurviest tricks; he, who was so timid and embarrassed, became impertinent and callous, vulgarised from top to toe.

Rousseau does not spare himself in his 'Confessions': he acknowledges everything without trying to make himself out better than he was—rather the contrary. But the excuse is always mentioned along with the confession—the actual culprit, we are told, was really not Jean Jacques,

but the master, Ducommun. The entire description of moral downfall is meant as an example of the distressing and unavoidable evils resulting from ill-treatment and bad training. Ducommun beat him, therefore he became hardened; Ducommun suspected him, therefore he became hypocritical and untruthful; Ducommun drove him from the table when the delicacies were brought in, therefore he became a gourmet and a gourmand. Ducommun denied him every natural and modest wish, therefore he became a thief, and so on, and so on. Jean Jacques was the victim, Ducommun the executioner.

This syllogism in the 'Confessions,' though insidiously clever and well-worded, does not strike us as quite convincing. We cannot help involuntarily thinking that another boy with other qualities, possibly under the same circumstances, would not have fallen down the steep stairs of decadence so precipitously and unresistingly.

Rousseau himself had a slight suspicion of this too, and—probably unwittingly—betrayed it in a few sentences that overturn the entire beautiful structure he had so carefully built: "In spite of my most excellent upbringing (*l'éducation la plus honnête*) I must have had *un grand penchant à dégénérer*, as this took place rapidly and without the least opposition, and never did such a precocious Cæsar become so quickly transformed into a Laridon."

Apart from "*l'éducation la plus honnête*" he is certainly much nearer the truth here. As we have seen, his nature was by no means free from possibilities of depravity from the very beginning, and if it had not been for this marked tendency to degenerate, to which he here confesses, but which is in absolute opposition to his well-known doctrine of the original goodness of mankind, matters would not have been so bad as they were at Ducommun's—at least, the backsliding would not have taken place so unresistingly, Cæsar would not have been transformed into Laridon so very quickly.

But in addition to this, what he calls his "most excellent upbringing" did not in reality delay the downfall at all, but,

on the contrary, must have hastened it. You understand what I mean without my repeating it,—the one-sided effeminacy that characterised his upbringing left him without counterpoise, and was instrumental in disarming him in the serious struggle for moral existence into which he was forced in Ducommun's loveless house. The degeneration that had begun in a mild way after the unfair treatment at Bossey, and that continued in Masseron's office, rapidly increased during the time spent at the brutal engraver's.

The childish virtues he boasts of having had in his earliest years—the affectionate nature, the longing for love, the open-heartedness, the confidence,—they were all weak plants that grew up in a too mild climate, and that at the first contact with cold, cruel reality withered away instantly, unresistingly, and helplessly; in their places a forest of weeds grew in the wretched soil, and later, when he awakened to an understanding of self-education, he was not man enough to uproot them entirely.

Still neither was Rousseau an ordinary scoundrel in this his first period of deterioration. Although he was not wholly cast down by his rascally tricks, neither was he in any way satisfied; he was bored; his comrades, the other apprentices, did not satisfy his intellectual needs; his gifts craved other nourishment than that which their low conversation offered, so he sought for it elsewhere, and found it in Mlle. Tribu's circulating library, which was not far distant.

This became a perfect passion—for a time—as so often with Rousseau when he undertook something new. "I read in the workroom, I read when I went on errands. When I had nothing with which to pay her I gave her my shirts, my collars—any small thing I had. The three sous I got every Sunday as pocket-money went to her regularly."

Indiscriminately, helter-skelter, he devoured the contents of Mlle. Tribu's shelves one after another; at the end of a year there was not a single book in the entire library which he had not read, except the naughty ones, which, according to Jean Jacques himself, had no attractions for him.

In this way he lived in two worlds, separated by a yawning abyss—in the workshop where he was scolded and beaten, and in the world of fancy gorged with all this reading, where he re-lived whatever scenes he chose. He had a regular method of indulging his imagination; it consisted in “saturating myself with all sorts of situations that had interested me in the books and experiencing them anew; I varied them, combined them, I appropriated them, so that I became one of the characters I was imagining, and always experienced the most agreeable situations. I finally succeeded in identifying myself so thoroughly with the fancied character that I forgot the reality, with which I was so dissatisfied. This love of imaginary subjects and the ease I had in abandoning myself to them increased my disgust for all that surrounded me, and were decisive factors in developing that tendency toward solitude which has never since left me.”

We see that he has progressed since the time he used to sit round-eyed in his father's workshop and devour ‘*L'Astrée*’ and ‘*Cyrus*.’ He was then a mere child, consuming without thought all these romances with their wonderful pictures and adventures. Now the reading of romances has become something different, a dissipation in which he seeks oblivion, a conscious flight from the hated reality that surrounds him. He is in a fair way to become a chronic dreamer.

In the meantime it was, of course, not at all in Ducommun's calculations that Jean Jacques should sit and waste his time at this eternal reading; it afforded an occasion for fresh scolding and beating; many a one of Mlle. Tribu's books went to pieces in his violent hands, and many a set in her library became incomplete during this time.

In this manner Jean Jacques was approaching his sixteenth year; a soul without balance, restless, dissatisfied with himself, with no love for his work, without the usual pleasures of his age, consumed with aimless desires, weeping without reason, sighing without knowing why, nursing dreams for lack of the reality that could compare to them. “On Sun-

days after church my comrades used to come for me to join them in their diversions. I should have been glad to get rid of them had I been able, but when I once got into a game I was more excited and went further than any other. Difficult to set in motion, difficult to hold back when started—during my entire life this has been my unvarying disposition.”

Finally the day came when he escaped from his hell—and in a strange way.

Sometimes he and his companions went on long jaunts in the neighbourhood of the town: it had happened twice that they had come home so late that they found the gates of the city closed, and were obliged to wait outside until they were opened the next morning. Jean Jacques had got a thorough hiding, and Ducommun had threatened him with such a reception in case of a recurrence that he had resolved not to expose himself to it.

“The dreaded third time came anyhow. . . . I was on my way home with two comrades. A quarter of a mile from town I hear the church bells ring, I redouble my speed, I hear the drum-rolls, I rush forward, breathless, swimming in sweat—my heart throbs, I see the soldiers at their post far off, I shriek with half-choked voice. It is too late—twenty steps from me I see the first bridge being raised. In my first terror I threw myself on the ground and bit the earth. My comrades simply laughed at their bad luck and accepted their fate. I also, but in another way,—I swore on the spot that I would never again return to my master, and the next day, when the gates were opened, the others went back to town, and I said farewell to them for ever.”

After having related this dramatic episode, he closes the first book of ‘Confessions’ with some observations on how he might have turned out had he fallen into better hands and had spent his life as a simple artisan in the town of his birth. “I would have made a good Christian, a good citizen, a good father, a good friend, a good man in every way. I would have loved my calling and probably have done honour

to it. And after having lived an unknown and simple, but even and happy life, I would have died peacefully in the bosom of my family. Though doubtlessly soon forgotten, nevertheless I would have been missed by my nearest and dearest as long as they should have remembered me. And instead of this, what a picture I shall unroll! Oh, let me not anticipate any of my life's miseries!"

Now this is pure coquetry, one of the nets that are so often set in 'Confessions,' and that are almost always successful. This sigh from Rousseau's heart is transferred to the reader's quite involuntarily, and is quite incompatible with what he is really thinking, which is, What good fortune that the drawbridge was raised and cut off his return home! What luck that he escaped from his cruel master and from provincial little Geneva, where he probably would have lived and died an unnoticed artisan in the lap of his family!

At length the first step is taken out into the world toward that great fate that awaits him.

Yes, this is what the reader involuntarily thinks—and it is, indeed, just what Rousseau intended him to do.

VI.

A CONVERSION.

IN the last chapter we left Rousseau standing outside the walls of Geneva. He had said farewell to his comrades, and was now absolutely alone in the world, without any kind of claim in any direction—neither on his family nor on society; barely sixteen years old, without a sou in his pocket, without a friend or adviser to depend on, without any acquirements that could be useful to him,—only a half-learned trade, by which he could not support himself—his head full of incoherent fragments of undigested learning, the strangest conceptions of reality and high-flown dreams of his own remarkableness.

Where should he turn? What should he undertake? Where was there a roof to cover his head? Where was the board at which he could satisfy his strong young appetite?

All these were serious and terrifying questions that might give him pause. But they did not seem to weigh very heavily on Jean Jacques; he felt like Aladdin when he turned his back on his home. He did not think of difficulties, he was full of thoughts of liberty and his own invincibleness. "Now that I was free and my own master, I thought that I could accomplish anything—attain everything; I only needed to be free in order to lift my wings and fly aloft. I wandered out into the wide world without fear; I should soon conquer it by my merits—at every step I should find feasts, treasures, adventures, friends ready to serve me, mistresses eager to please me. As soon as I should appear

the whole world would ring with my praises,—well, not exactly the whole world—I would be satisfied with less—a single castle was, for the moment, the limit of my ambition. As the favourite of master and mistress, the daughter's lover, the son's friend, and the neighbour's protector, I should be satisfied—I needed only this."

While awaiting this modest fate he drifted about, and he has much to say in praise of the peasants, who fed and housed him without thinking of payment, and with such hospitality that he never felt like an object of charity.

One day he came to Confignon, a Savoyard country town about two miles from Geneva. The priest of the parish was named De Pontverre, and Rousseau became possessed of a desire to see with his own eyes a member of the family that had played such a great *rôle* in the history of Geneva; and a strange desire it was in a young Genevan who had grown up under the influence of such a patriotic father, for the Pontverres had always been Geneva's bitterest enemies. They had been most active in the struggle to bend the republic under the subjection of Savoy; they were fanatic Catholics, who tried by every means to make proselytes of the Genevans and to entice the Calvinists into the bosom of the only blessed Church. The priest of Confignon was now an old man, and could boast of many conversions; he had written many bitter pamphlets against Genevan clergymen, and was well, if not favourably, known in the republic. It is not certain that Rousseau knew anything of this; at any rate, he does not mention it.

However, he sought admittance at his door. "He received me kindly, talked about Geneva's heresy, about the authority of the Holy Mother Church, and invited me to dinner." They sat opposite each other, the seventy-five-year-old fanatic and the sixteen-year-old vagabond. The priest became eloquent, and produced all sorts of arguments in favour of the holy cause which lay so near to his heart. Jean Jacques did not make much attempt to answer him, but, of course, it was not because he could not. We are assured that he was better

informed than the priest, and could easily have crushed him, but the food was good, the Frangi wine excellent: it would have been discourteous to argue against such a host. But we must not think that this was duplicity or hypocrisy on his part; we are assured that it was only amiability. He was not thinking in the least of changing his religion; that was an idea that he rejected with horror for the moment. But why should he not be amiable toward one who was so agreeable to him? Why could not the priest hope to accomplish something by his words? So Jean Jacques did not protest. "I resembled, on this occasion, those respectable coquettes who, without granting or promising anything, nevertheless give more hope than they intend fulfilling."

However, he must have gone pretty far in his coquetry, for the priest obviously did not doubt but that he had led him to the proper road, and he sent him on with great hopes. "God calls you," he said; "go to Annécý, where you will find a good and charitable woman who, thanks to the king's generosity, is able to lead other souls out of the snares of the delusion by which she herself was once possessed." This was Mme. de Warens, who came to play such an important rôle in his life. Still Jean Jacques did not protest. Though at first his feelings rebelled at the doubtful path he was following, and though he left the priest with a heavy heart, it was not long before he recovered his spirit. All sorrow was forgotten by the time he had reached the highroad. He did not hasten, he was in no hurry to meet the pious woman, of whose age and worth he had not got a very cheerful impression. It is not more than one day's walk from Confignon to Annécý. Jean Jacques, sauntering and dreaming, took three days.

"I never passed a chateau, on either side of the road, without looking about for the adventure that I was sure awaited me. I did not dare to enter a chateau or to knock on the door, for I was extremely timid. But I sang under the window that looked most promising, and was surprised to find that the beauty of my voice and the charm of my

singing enticed neither maid nor matron from her bower, in spite of the fact that I knew many songs, which I had learned from my comrades, and I sang so admirably."

At last he arrived at his destination. It was not without excitement that he prepared for this meeting, which might prove so significant for his future. He felt by no means at ease as to whether his manner would prove to his advantage in every way, and this caused him to put together a long letter, embossed with many rhetorical ornaments and references from his reading. He expected it to help him to give Mme. de Warens a good impression. Unfortunately, this letter is not in existence; but the fact that he went to so much trouble as to write it, indicates very strongly, it seems to me, that Rousseau was by no means so ignorant of Pontverre's plans for him as he tries to make out in the passage quoted above.

He did not find Mme. de Warens at home—she had just gone to church.

"It was Palm Sunday, 1728. I hasten after her, I see her, I reach her, I talk with her; I well remember the place; I have since often watered it with my tears and covered it with my kisses. Oh, I should like to encircle this blessed spot with a balustrade of gold! I should like the whole world to do homage to it! Those who would do honour to the monument of a saviour of mankind should approach this place on their knees.

"It was on the path behind the house, a brook on the right, the fence of the court on the left; at the end was a gate leading into the churchyard. Mme. de Warens was just about to enter the gate when she heard my voice and turned. What a surprise awaited me! I had expected to meet a sour old devotee; . . . I see before me a face full of charm, beautiful soft blue eyes, a dazzling complexion, the outlines of a charming figure. Nothing escaped the quick eyes of the young proselyte. I became hers on the spot,—convinced that a creed proclaimed by such a missionary must lead to Paradise. She smilingly takes the letter,

which I extend to her with shaking hand ; she opens it, reads it from beginning to end. 'My child,' she said in a voice that thrilled me, 'you are very young to be already on the highway—it is really too bad——' Without waiting for my answer, she added : 'Go in and wait for me ; tell them to give you breakfast ; after mass, I shall come and talk to you.'"

The result of the interview was not to Jean Jacques' satisfaction ; there was no question of keeping him at Annécý—which had become his dearest wish. It was decided that he should journey to Turin, in the company of a married couple (of doubtful reputation), and there prepare for his formal admission into the Catholic Church. The thought of the magnificent long trip over the Alps soon monopolised Jean Jacques' fancy, and reconciled him to the separation.

The question involuntarily occurs to one : where was Jean Jacques' father at the time, and Uncle Bernard, who was supposed to be his guardian ? Indeed, the uncle really had gone as far as Confignon in search of him, but when he heard that Jean Jacques had gone to Annécý, he went home much relieved.

A little later, Isaac Rousseau also relieved his conscience by taking steps to find him, but not until circumstances forced him to do so. Jean Jacques had been guilty of a breach of contract in running away from his apprenticeship in its third year, when he was bound for five, and as his father was responsible, Ducommun demanded damages. Isaac took a friend with him and went to Annécý, where he met Mme. de Warens, but instead of going in pursuit of the boy—which would have been the easiest thing in the world, as he was on horseback—he contented himself with bemoaning his son's sorrowful fate in company with the same charitable dame that had sent him away.

The fact was that the elder Rousseau had good reasons for keeping clear of his son. There had been a bit of money with the mother, which really belonged to the sons, but Isaac enjoyed the interest of it as long as they were away.

He had married again, and as he was beginning to get old and had not much to live on, life was not so easy. When Jean Jacques refers to this laxity, he tries to cover it up with candied phrases, as he generally had to do when writing of his father, but "der langen Rede kurzer Sinn" was no other than that the "best of fathers" lightly permitted his younger son, his "idol," to run away, and did not make the least effort to recover him, for the extremely simple reason that he profited by his absence.

In the meantime, Jean Jacques, happy and undisturbed, wandered toward Sardinia's capital: he had never felt so strong, so blooming with health, so confident of himself and of others, as on this journey. The way was so long, the destination so far distant, that he could abandon himself to the charm of the moment without a thought for the morrow. At last, he knew what it was to taste "*le plaisir d'aller sans savoir où*,"—one hundred and ninety-six miles on foot over the steep hills and precipitous mountain-passes in company with an elderly couple who were obliged to go slowly.

At times he would wander, dreamily conjuring up visions, then again he would abandon himself to a perfect frenzy of joy; the flying clouds, the fairy-like mountain-tops, the green pastures, the tiny huts of the peasants, the dazzling sunshine, the cool shadows,—they supplied his fancy with a wealth of images that expanded his whole nature, and filled him with an abounding sense of the glory of existence. And how proud he was to follow in the footsteps of Hannibal over the Alps! And how delicious it was, in the evening, to come to the pleasant wayside inns with a glorious appetite, which could always be satisfied without thought or trouble on his part!

In recalling this journey he bursts into a hymn in honour of wandering afoot, and his thoughts go sadly back to later years, when duty and business and baggage forced him to become "Monsieur" and travel by carriage. "Then I felt only joy in walking, now I am concerned solely in reaching my destination."

At last they reached Turin; much too soon—so soon, in fact, that in retrospect the journey seemed eight days to him, although it really took fourteen. However, the town itself offered him consolation; he had never before seen a large town, and the varied life and many diversions were also stuff for dreams,—visions of the great figure he was soon to cut in the world.

So he hoped, but the hope was quickly extinguished. It is true he had had a very faint conception of what he was intended to do in Turin, but it is certain that the reality was less pleasant than his most modest expectations. He presented his letters of introduction to the proper persons, and was immediately placed in the so-called "Catechumens' Hospice," a seminary for proselytes.

A huge gate with iron shutters opened to him, and then closed with a disagreeable hollow sound. This gate at once became a symbol for him, he felt imprisoned,—a feeling that never left him as long as he was there. He entered a large bare room, whose only furniture was an altar of wood with a crucifix hanging over it, and a few unpainted chairs shiny with age; in this assembly room he met four or five repulsive rogues—two of them negroes—who later confided to him that they spent their lives moving from spot to spot in Spain and Italy, pretending to be converts, and being baptised at every place if it seemed profitable. And then the door opened, and in came a flock of female proselytes, a collection of the worst hussies that ever besmirched the cradle of Christ.

The little congregation had been summoned in honour of the newcomer. A short prayer was held admonishing Rousseau to be grateful for the grace that had been bestowed upon him, and urging the others to pray for him.

This impressive introduction caused him to think seriously for the first time over the step that he was about to take.

In reporting this occasion in 'Confessions,' he refers for the fifth or sixth time to the excellent training he had

had in his earliest childhood; he praises his father for his genuine piety, his aunts for their heartfelt goodness, Pastor Lamercier and his sister for the comprehending lenity with which they, without undue sermonising, had planted the germ of religious truth in him. When he was with Ducommun he certainly did not ponder much over such things; but it had never occurred to him that anything could be otherwise than as he had been taught in childhood.

"In fact, I was as religious as a child of my age could be, indeed more so, for why shall I seek to hide what I really think? My childhood was never that of a child. I always thought and felt as a man does. It was after I was grown that I sank to the level of those of my own age. . . . One may laugh at hearing me modestly represent myself as a prodigy, but when one has had his laugh out, let him show me a six-year-old child whom the romances he reads interest and transport to the point of passionate tears; if he can, I will acknowledge that I am wrong, that my vanity is ridiculous.

"When I said (in 'Émile') that one must not talk to children about religion if one wishes them to become religious, and that they are not capable of comprehending God, I derived my opinion from my observations and not from my experience. If you can find six-year-old children like Jean Jacques Rousseau, you will run no risk in talking to them of God when they are seven."

That he went as far as he did with the Catholics was not because he lacked religion, but it was in youthful thoughtlessness: to go over to the Catholic Church seriously and formally was a step the importance of which he had not up to this time realised. But it was no longer possible to avoid the question, and he looked with terror, he says, on the responsibility he had taken upon himself. The other proselytes whom he saw about him were not of a type to encourage him, and he could not hide from himself that the abuse of the holy act which he was about to perpetrate

was a rascally trick and nothing else. "As young as I was, I nevertheless knew that, whatever religion might be the true one, I was about to sell mine, I was on the point of lying against the Holy Spirit from the bottom of my heart, and thereby earning the contempt of mankind. The more I thought of this the more indignant I felt at myself, and I groaned under the fate that had led me to it, as if this fate were not my own work. There were moments when these thoughts became so overpowering that, had I found the gate open a moment, I would certainly have run away, but this was impossible."

There were many things besides that kept him from fleeing—his fear of returning to Geneva, difficulties connected with the long journey over the mountains, his lonely position in the world, the fact that he had neither friends nor adherents in any quarter,—oh no! there was no way out of it—he must accept the consequences of his rashness. He contented himself with self-reproaches and qualms of conscience over his past, without seriously thinking of taking a firm resolution to put an end to it, and thereby save his soul from this guilt before it was too late. He himself is of the opinion that this would have been asking too much of a boy of his age,—the net was drawn too tightly about him, there was no escape.

And so he awaited the unavoidable issue, all the while making awkward efforts at opposition. He disputed with his teachers, and that satisfied his vanity to such an extent that he forgot all thoughts of flight; if we can believe what he says, he went about for a long time nursing the ridiculous hope of being able, by his arguments, to convince the Catholic priests of their delusions, and to convert them to Protestantism.¹ He relates many stories of his own cleverness and the stupidity of his opponents,—how he put them to the wall by his theological learning, so that they could

¹ "Je mis même à cette-*il* entreprise un zèle bien ridicule; car tandis qu'ils travaillaient sur moi, je voulus travailler sur eux. Je croyais bonnement qu'il ne fallût qu*i* les convaincre, pour les engager à se faire protestants."

save themselves from discomfiture only by flight or cheap sophism.

But of course this did not do him the least good. The day came (August 1728) when his teachers considered his acquirements sufficient, and the disposition of his heart satisfactory. "I was led to St John's Church to take a ceremonious oath of renunciation and receive the emblems of baptism—though I was not formally re-christened. As both ceremonies are the same, this only serves to convince people that Protestants are not Christians. I was dressed in a grey robe such as they use on these occasions. Two men—one on each side of me—carried copper kettles on which they beat with keys, and in which offerings were put, each giving in accordance with his means and the interest he had for the convert. In short, they omitted no ceremony of the Catholic ritual that might make the occasion more edifying for the public, and more humiliating for me."

But that was not the end of it. Afterwards he had to go to the Inquisition to get absolution for his heresy, and be admitted to the Holy Church. It was a consolation to Rousseau, who on all occasions compares himself to the greatest men in the history of the world, that he was subjected to the same ceremonies as those under which Henry IV. had renounced his faith. And yet it was a dreadful moment. "The aspect and manner of the very reverend Inquisitor were not such as to dissipate the secret fear that had seized me on entering the house. After several questions about my faith, my position, my family, he suddenly asked me if my mother was damned. Fear made me control my first start of indignation. I contented myself with answering that I hoped not, but that God had enlightened her in her last hours. The monk said nothing, but made a grimace which did not seem to me at all a sign of approbation." With this kick at the unmitigated cruelty of Catholic fanaticism, Rousseau ends the story of his conversion.

Do we dare believe it? Did it really happen just as

he told it? Did he really undergo all the struggles and anxieties of which he speaks? Did his soul tremble with horror over the weakness that caused him to perpetrate a deed that he, in his heart, really condemned?

To answer these questions we must think of the condition of Rousseau's life when he wrote his 'Confessions.' He was surrounded by enemies on all sides; he had had serious quarrels with practically all of his former friends. Voltaire was after him, Grimm slandered him, Diderot hated him, Mme. d'Épinay had abandoned him. All were at war with him, and he was harassed by the thought that a formal plot was being formed against him. One of the most frequent and effective of the weapons brought against him was his renegade character—the repeated changes of faith of which he had been guilty,—his conversion from Calvinism to Catholicism, his return to the Genevan Church, his daring utterances in 'Émile,' which had caused the Genevan clergy, in their turn, to renounce him and burn his books—and from religious scruples also; in Diderot's 'Tablettes' we read: "This false man was as vain as Satan, ungrateful, cruel, hypocritical and malicious; his various apostasies from Catholicism to Protestantism, from Protestantism to Catholicism, without believing in either, prove this only too well."

Rousseau had constantly been the object of such calumny during his lifetime also—and when he relates in 'Confessions' the circumstances of his conversion, he feels that hostile eyes are upon him, and his narration involuntarily takes the form of a defence; his aim is to make his apostasy sound as plausibly innocent as possible.

However, he makes his defence unnecessarily difficult by trying at the same time to represent himself as a marvellous prodigy, the hero of 'Confessions'; of course, in many respects he really was phenomenal, but not in the domain with which we are now concerned.

We cannot believe Rousseau in the least when he represents himself as a child with early-developed religious

instincts. On the contrary, what he tells of his early life and spiritual emotions rather point to the opposite conclusion. At Bossey, when he became overpowered by his strange vices, we do not hear that he sought refuge or comfort in religion, although nothing could have been more natural; even had he been a child with average religious instincts, his childish faith would have offered the most natural help under temptation. Neither do we find him exhibiting any hint of religious deliberation under the crisis he underwent at the time he was unjustly punished for an offence of which he was innocent; he showed no religious resignation to his fate. And when he was with Ducommun, his *penchant à dégénérer* was allowed to express itself without opposition; there was no consciousness of sin, no remorse, no desire to amend; according to his own account he sank deeper and deeper into the abyss of degradation—like a conscienceless heathen. He was without any sort of ideal of religious perfection. Read carefully through the first book of ‘Confessions,’ in which he tries to relive every detail of his childhood—he remembers every mood that grazed his soul, he forgets nothing, he admits us into his thoughts, into his dreams, into his innocent joys and his shameful vices, into his small triumphs and his bitter disappointments. At the last, we seem to see this strange boy before us and to know him through and through, in every corner of his soul. But of religion we see no signs, neither scruples, nor piety, nor childlike confidence. I do not believe there were any, for I cannot imagine whence they could have come.

If we once more consider the story of his conversion, abstracting all of his observations and retaining only the bare facts, we still find difficulty in putting a finger on any hint of religious struggle or anxiety.

When he found himself outside the walls of Geneva, lonely and abandoned, the first thing he did was to apply to Pontverre, a man of whose strong Catholic predilections he could not have been ignorant. In his conversation he conducted himself so that the priest could not do otherwise

than believe that he intended becoming a Catholic; without protest, he suffered himself to be sent to Annécý for further treatment; he even wrote a long letter that proves that he was very anxious to ingratiate himself into the favour of Mme. de Warens—a woman of whom he, at the time, knew nothing except that she was willing to transfer his soul safely to the bosom of the Catholic Church. Afterwards he calmly allowed himself to be sent to Turin, to be instructed in the pure doctrine. In the school he disputed a little with the priests, he says, but this only served to gratify his vanity, and he does not give a single hint of having protested against the conversion, or that he ever thought seriously of withdrawing from it. He went like a lamb to St John's Church and under the most formal ceremonies abjured his Calvinistic faith—thence to the Inquisition to get absolution for his heresy and to be declared worthy of entering the Holy Church.

What his conversion had brought him up to this time was food and shelter, and, for the moment, that was what he most needed. But his hopes for the future had certainly mounted higher. Here are the sentiments with which he left the Hospice in Turin: "When all this was over" (the renunciation, the absolution, &c.), "and I was expecting to get a position in accordance with my hopes, they drove me out of the door with little more than the twenty francs that the collection had brought in. They recommended me to live like a good Christian in the grace of God, they wished me good luck, shut the door on me, and disappeared.

"Thus in one moment all my great hopes were eclipsed, and in return for the self-interested step which I had just taken, I received nothing except the remembrance of having been, at once, an apostate and a dupe. It is easy to judge what a sudden revolution took place in my ideas when I saw myself plunged from my brilliant prospects into the deepest misery."

Yes, here is the whole secret. It was necessity that drove him into the lap of the Catholic Church—for the moment,

necessary means of subsistence, for the future, brilliant hopes for a splendid career. And undeniably this is not particularly admirable. But on the other hand, I do not see either that it can be justly used—as it so often has been—as a theme for moral consternation over Rousseau's corruption, falsity, and hypocrisy. A sixteen-year-old boy who had just run away from demoralising surroundings, without a foothold in any quarter, either moral or material, poor as a church-mouse, without prospects, dependent on himself alone,—that he, without any particular scruples, should grasp after the straw offered him, in order to hold himself above water and lift himself to the heights which his fantastic ambition held up to his view—this is really not dreadful enough to cause so much discussion.

But if he himself is right, the situation is different: if this child is no child, but a full-grown man in opinions and convictions, if he after serious anxieties and inner struggles, in the full consciousness of his own faithlessness and in spite of his better self, renounces for the sake of gain a belief that he really had,—then this is a serious matter, and we must agree with his self-accusation when he says that he sold his religion and lied against the Holy Spirit. And we must agree with him when he says that he deserved the contempt of mankind. But in this case I am sure that we should defend Rousseau against himself without reservation. He certainly did not sell his religion, for he had none to sell; he did not lie against the Holy Spirit, because he had never had anything to do with the Holy Spirit. Nor does he deserve the contempt of mankind if, driven by necessity, he helped himself in the only way he could. His sixteen years and his desperate condition are excuse enough.¹

¹ In 'Rêveries,' 3rd promenade, where Rousseau speaks of his conversion, there is no mention of qualms of conscience. He uses without circumlocution such expressions as: "Enfant encore, laissé à moi-même, alléché par les caresses, séduit par la vanité, leurré par l'espérance, forcé par la nécessité, je me fis catholique, mais je restai chrétien." Cf. *Émile*, l. iv. p. 127: "Il était né calviniste; mais par les suites d'une étourderie, se trouvant fugitif, en pays étranger, sans ressource, il changea de religion pour avoir du pain."

Rousseau compared his conversion with that of Henry IV. ; but the essential conditions were different. The old king could console himself by saying, "Paris vaut une messe," but Rousseau was obliged to limit himself and ask modestly if twenty francs were sufficient payment for changing his faith. However, his Catholicism was never worth much more ; it never touched the bottom of his soul, even though he himself relates that he went regularly to mass, and, on one occasion, by his prayers, helped a bishop to perform a miracle. He was and continued to be a Protestant by nature, an individualist who could never be bound by the forms of tradition or authority. And when his religious life finally did awaken, he was fully justified in looking upon the conversion of his youth as a boyish prank, and was able, with a good conscience, to return to that Church from which he came and to which he was bound by natural ties.

VII.

ON A FALSE SCENT.

THE 23rd of August 1728 Jean Jacques stood on the streets of Turin alone and friendless once more. His feelings were the same as on the occasion, six months before, when the drawbridge of Geneva was raised, cutting him off from access to his home. He was not alarmed by his solitariness; he did not realise his helplessness. He had been imprisoned for many long weeks and now was free; he had no duties to perform, no hated classes to attend; he had said farewell to his detested teachers. He was never again to see the cruel face of the Father Inquisitor; there were to be no more lessons, no more prayers, no more examinations; he was his own master, and his heart rejoiced at the thought of freedom—freedom, the greatest and the most indispensable of man's rights. It was not to be denied that his high hopes had been disappointed, that his towering visions had disappeared like soap-bubbles; but his reservoir of dreams was bottomless, and his new plans for the future vied with the old in pomp and splendour. He found himself in a large town swarming with people; there could be no doubt but that some one would soon discover him and raise him to the position for which nature had qualified him. In the meantime he could afford to wait—had he not twenty francs in his pocket? He had never owned such a capital before; he had no cause for fear or discouragement.

All day he sauntered about aimlessly—tasting his liberty. He climbed up to the parade-grounds to enjoy the stirring

military music; he joined a procession which was marching toward the king's palace, and, seeing others enter, he followed them in and immediately felt at home there. After all this wandering about his youthful appetite announced itself, and he went into a milk-shop, where, for a few sous, he got a dish of clabber and a few slices of delicious Piedmontese bread—a lordly meal, which he remembered with unmitigated pleasure thirty years after.

Night fell and he looked about for a roof to cover him. A soldier's wife, who kept lodgings for unemployed servants at a sou a night, took him in; the hostess, her children, and her guests all slept in the same room, so the air could not have been any too agreeable; the woman, who went about half-dressed and with dishevelled hair, was good-hearted and kind, and, on a later occasion, was even of assistance to Jean Jacques.

He drifted about for several days, enjoying his liberty and satisfying his curiosity; he was astir late and early; he pried into everything both in town and out, made many discoveries, overlooking nothing that seemed to him new and remarkable—and that included almost all there was to be seen, for he had never before been in a large town. Every day, at a fixed hour, he went to the castle—"attended court," as he expresses it—in order to hear the splendid music. The King of Sardinia at that time was considered to have the best singers and orchestra in the world, and it was here that Rousseau laid the first foundation of his enthusiasm for Italian music, an enthusiasm that was to set Paris afire many years later. The pomp he saw about him pleased his eye too, and he was quite happy in royal society, but not the least overawed nor the least envious. However, his glances often darted covetously toward the group of distinguished ladies, in the hope of discovering a princess who deserved his homage, and with whom it might be worth while to begin a romance.

The romance was soon to be enacted, but the heroine was not exactly of royal blood.

Although Rousseau lived very plainly and frugally, he nevertheless could not be blind to the fact that he would very soon be at the end of his resources, and that he must set about finding some means of subsistence, and that very quickly. He went from shop to shop proffering his services as engraver, and was allowed to decorate one or two things with initials or a coat-of-arms, but, as a rule, he was refused, so he did not earn more than enough for one or two meals. When things were at their worst luck found him. One day he was looking in a shop-window when he discovered that the young woman who stood behind the desk was very beautiful. She looked so attractive that he went in without hesitation and offered her his services. She did not dismiss him but asked him to sit down, questioned him, and listened to his story with interest, gave him work, invited him to breakfast—in short, encouraged him in every way.

Her name was Mme. Basile. She was a brunette, “extrêmement piquante,” and her whole being shone with kindness, so that even her merriment was somewhat pathetic. Her husband had gone away, and as he was not free from jealousy, he had left a hideously unattractive clerk, in whose keeping her virtue would be perfectly safe, installed as protector for his beautiful wife. Of course Rousseau had not been many hours in the presence of the lovely Mme. Basile before his heart was quite aflame. When he was in her company he could hardly breathe for his rapture, and was extremely unhappy when not with her. In spite of the slight coquetry which she had in common with all Italian women, she was excessively modest and retiring in her manner—much too proper to make any sort of encouraging advances. Rousseau often observed that her breast heaved violently as if in great emotion, and of course he was not in the least doubt as to the cause; but nevertheless he did not dare to take the initiative. One day Mme. Basile left the shop and went up to her room. Rousseau sneaked after her and slipped silently into the

room. She sat bowed over her work and did not notice him; in a transport of ecstasy he fell on his knees and lifted his arms in adoration; she saw him in the mirror over the fireplace, was slightly alarmed, but without thinking much about it pointed at the rug beside her chair. He rushed to it and fell at her feet, and remained lying there a long time; he dared not speak to her, dared not touch the hem of her robe, but lost himself in heavenly abandonment, until a step was heard on the stair; he rose in haste, supporting himself by her beautiful hand, which he kissed passionately several times. She did not resist, she even pressed her hand against his lips. And then the door opened and the housemaid entered.

This half-comical, half-pathetic episode is a very good example of Rousseau's attitude towards women; time after time it repeats itself, and we find him kneeling in the same position in inarticulate worship, but without any final results. He himself says that he could love more passionately, more purely, more deeply than any one else, and he very seldom doubts that his feelings are reciprocated; but nevertheless the masculine initiative which one might expect on such occasions is always absolutely lacking.

The hot kiss on the hand of his mistress was the culminating point of his romance with Mme. Basile; a short time afterwards the husband came home, and without hesitation kicked the warm-eyed vagabond out of the house. He loitered about in the neighbourhood of the house for a few days in the hope of catching a glimpse of his beloved; but he saw no one except the ugly clerk, who lifted his measuring-rod so threateningly that he found it wisest to depart.

The worthy Mme. Basile had looked after his wardrobe, so that he made rather a good appearance, but he was as poor as a church-mouse and his prospects for the future were quite wretched. But one day the hostess of his lodging-house came to him and told him that she could get him a situation; there was a certain distinguished lady who wished to see him. A distinguished lady! It needed no

more to give wings to Rousseau's fancy. At last he had been discovered; now his adventures were to begin! New disappointment! The distinguished lady was no disappointment, for she was the Countess of Vercellis and belonged to Turin's highest aristocracy; but there came nothing of the adventures he hoped for. He took a position in the house as lackey, and, attired in the family uniform, was placed with the rest of the servants.

The Countess was no ordinary woman. She wrote letters which in spirit and charm were comparable to those of Mme. de Sévigné; she was familiar with French literature and understood it. But Rousseau she did not understand. She questioned him and listened to his story; but she did not return his confidences, and she did not "discover" him—which he always held up against her. In addition to this, he did not get along with the other servants: they understood quite well, so he thought, that he was of another type than they, that he was created for something higher than being lackey, and so they did not like him; they tried to influence the Countess against him, and they succeeded only too well. When she died a short time afterwards, he was the only one of the servants not mentioned in her will.

Before Rousseau left the Countess de Vercellis' house something happened which, according to his own story, set indelible marks on his soul. He was guilty of a piece of rascality for which he never forgave himself. The story ran thus:—

A short time after the death of the Countess, a small object belonging to the house, an old rose-coloured ribbon embroidered with silver, was missed. "I could easily have taken many other more valuable objects," says Rousseau, "but this ribbon tempted me and I stole it, and, as I had not tried particularly to hide it, it was soon discovered in my room. They asked me where I had got it; I become confused, stammer, and finally say blushing that Marion had given it to me. Marion was the cook, a thoroughly good creature whom no one would have suspected of a theft.

They send for her, confront her with the ribbon, and I repeat my accusation. She is silent, dumbfounded, casts a glance at me that would have disarmed a devil, but my cruel heart resists it. At last she denies the theft—utterly, but without violence; she turns to me, begs me to reconsider before I ruin an innocent girl who has never harmed me; but I repeat the assertion and insist to her very face that she had given me the ribbon.” Nothing more came of the affair, but Rousseau maintained his accusation with such boldness that he was believed, and poor Marion left the house with a spotted reputation.

Rousseau fills several pages of ‘Confessions’ with observations on his dastardliness, and his commentaries interest us more than the story itself. He tries to explain how he happened to be guilty of such a cruel act; he says that he had no evil intentions, he did not wish to harm Marion; on the contrary, he was fond of her. But the cause of his baseness was, as so often in Rousseau’s life, his sense of shame. “When I saw her approaching my heart broke, but the presence of so many people was a stronger influence than my repentance. I was not at all afraid of the punishment, it was only the shame I feared, but I feared this more than death, more than the crime itself, more than the whole world. . . . It was the shame only that caused my effrontery; the more criminal I became the more shamelessly I acted, spurred on by my dread of confessing. I could think of nothing except the horror of being discovered and of hearing myself called a thief, a liar, a slanderer.”

In other words, his vanity was stronger than all other considerations—the fear of involving himself in difficulties caused him unscrupulously to sacrifice another who was innocent. To the above explanation he adds: “If M. de la Roque” (Mme. de Vercellis’ son-in-law) “had taken me aside and had said to me: do not ruin this poor girl; if you are guilty, confess it to me,—I would instantly have thrown myself at his feet, I am quite sure.” I do not believe this, and it appears to me that Rousseau himself, in

what he writes on the subject a little later, gives proof that he is lying or deceiving himself. When, a year after the episode of Marion, he returned to Mme. de Warens, "she made me tell my story, which was not long and which I related truly and honestly, *although I omitted one or two things.*" ('Confessions,' Livre iii.) Among the things he omitted was the story of the ribbon. Another passage in 'Confessions' runs thus: "I have never been able to relieve my heart by confessing this sin to a friend; I have not done so to my most intimate friends, not even to Mme. de Warens." No—he understood how to keep things to himself; no one, not even Maman, the friend of his heart, was allowed to see him in the unflattering light of truth. He lacked the necessary moral courage.

But then why does he tell it to us in 'Confessions'? Why does he not spare us this and other similar meannesses? There is absolutely no necessity for it; he could have continued silent without any risk whatever.

Ducros (page 45 ff.) explains the whole thing as Rousseau's tactics; he thinks that Rousseau uses this and other such confessions in order to secure the reader's confidence. A man who exhibits his own dastardliness so unsparingly could not be thought to be a liar; we must believe him. And Rousseau has need of a great deal of credulity, especially in the latter part of 'Confessions,' where it is necessary for him to lead the reader to believe in his account of his relations with all of his enemies.

This explanation is not satisfactory. It appears to me on the whole that Ducros in his analysis of 'Confessions,' which in other respects is so sharp and thorough, lays too much stress on Rousseau's *habileté*. Rousseau was a much too warm-blooded and passionate nature to lay systematic snares for his readers with consistent and premeditated cunning; it is true that he often leads us astray very cleverly, but he does not do so with full consciousness and cool deliberation—at least, very rarely. As a rule, he is a victim of auto-suggestion. I am quite convinced that the

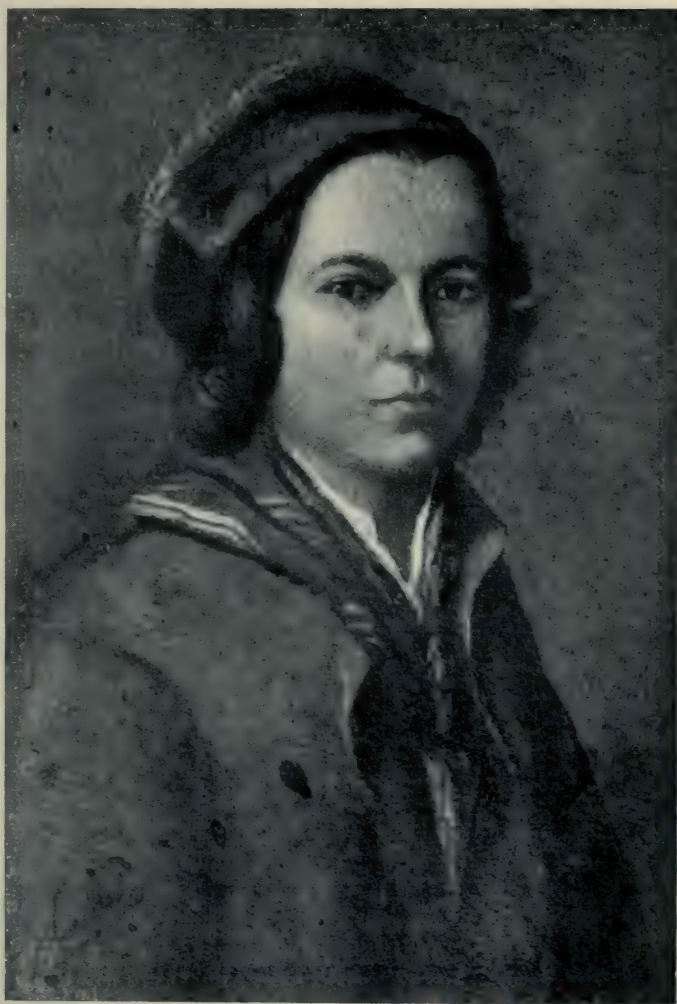
strong words with which he, in the opening of 'Confessions,' promises to represent himself exactly as he is, were sincere; it was really his most earnest intention to confess to the last shred, and in a certain way he did this too—more completely than any other autobiographer. But there is one thing every human creature has experienced in more or less degree, and that is that we, in our most sincere moments, are not able to eliminate our self-assertiveness and our vanity; that there is present, in every one of us, an advocate who is always ready to act as defender, and, in case of necessity, to use means which we allow to pass, even though they would be rejected if tested by the more sensitive scales of conscience. In the case of a man like Rousseau, whose sense of self was abnormally strong, whose character was by no means conspicuously sincere, the ingenuity of whose fantasy was inexhaustible, whose eloquence was always in readiness, and who (according to Dr Espinas) was probably a born neurotic subject,—in the case of such a man, the aforementioned advocate has a wealth of resources at his disposal that enables him, at the proper moment, to get the better of the most honourable intentions of unadulterated sincerity. Here we are concerned with fine nuances, and it is not easy to reach decisive conclusion; in our moral as well as in our intellectual lives, there sometimes arise conditions which we may speak of as characterised by no more than half (or even a lesser fraction of) consciousness, and, after many perusals of 'Confessions,' I have come to the conclusion that, in those passages where we are certain that Rousseau's explanation is misleading, he has as a rule deceived himself also—if not always from the very beginning, at any rate during the course of his narration, by self-persuasion.

But it does not follow that we must allow ourselves to be deceived, and, for my part, I am not at all impressed by his belated confession of his meanness towards Marion, and do not agree in the least with Henri Martin when he calls it "*un aveu héroïque*" ('Hist. de France,' xvi. 63). If

Rousseau, in Mme. de Vercellis' house, surrounded by many people, had done what he should have done, had conquered his egoism and confessed, that would have been an exhibition of moral courage, although even then he could not have boasted of any sort of heroism; but a confession, written with no eyes upon him, thirty or forty years after the crime, in a document which was to be published after his death—such a confession is absolutely without any moral value, though it has its psychological interest.

We may say the same of the violent compunctions of conscience that Rousseau, according to his own story, suffered because of his sin against Marion and that he looked upon as an expiation of his crime. He uses the strongest expressions to make us believe that the memory of it pursued him during the whole of his life; he speaks of a burden that his conscience was not able to throw off, after forty long years of suffering; indeed, as time went on, the bitterness in his heart did not become alleviated in the least; on the contrary, it was constantly increasing. He did not know what had become of poor Marion; perhaps she had sunk into the depths of vice, and perhaps it was his sin that had caused her degradation. Sometimes, on sleepless nights, she appeared to him and reminded him of what he had done. He could never get rid of the thought, "and I may say that the wish to free myself from it contributed largely to my decision to write my confessions." He had one consolation, and that was the fact that the dreadful impression left on him by this, his only crime, at any rate kept him from ever committing a similar act for the rest of his life, "and I feel quite sure that my aversion to falsehood can be largely attributed to my remorse over having been able to perpetrate such a black lie" (*du regret d'en avoir pu faire un aussi noir*).

All this does not inspire any high degree of confidence. With a probability amounting almost to certainty we can assert that Rousseau did not by any means spend his entire life bowed down by compunctions of conscience over this



ROUSSEAU IN YOUTH.

questionable act. His later life, such as he himself describes it, does not exhibit the least sign that he underwent a moral crisis at this time; and his "aversion to falsehood" did not hinder him afterwards from lying with ease and fluency whenever the situation demanded it.

Then are all these strong words only rhetorical hypocrisy and *habileté*? Hardly: in all probability he believed in them himself; he deceives himself as well as his readers. During the course of his life the thought of Marion may sometimes have rested on his soul like a dark shadow, and now, when he sits down to write his 'Confessions,' these memories condense themselves within him, until he becomes possessed by a mood in which he really undergoes the sufferings he is describing.

Once more in the course of his writings he came back to Marion. The year before his death, in 'Rêveries' (4th promenade), he employed equally strong terms of remorse, and he repeated his declaration in regard to his "horreur pour le mensonge." But he added a number of sophistical observations on the subject of lies, among which appear certain lines that throw light on the point with which we are concerned. "My moral instinct has never deceived me," he says; "it has preserved its purity in my heart until this very day, so that I can rely on it; and if it may sometimes remain silent, when my passions have the upper hand, it resumes its certain sway over them in my memory. It is therefore, perhaps, that I judge myself just as strictly as I shall be judged in another life by the Highest Judge."

These words are not only highly characteristic of Rousseau, but at the same time exhibit certain psychological traits peculiar to authors in general: when Ibsen sits in judgment on himself, perhaps he too is indulging in retrospect, and one not entirely unpleasant or quite lacking in enjoyable moments; and when Kierkegaard defines a poet as an unhappy creature tormented by deep anguish, with lips so formed that his sighs sound like beautiful music, we must not conclude that he is unaware of the music he himself pro-

duces, or that he is unconscious of the beauty of it. With Rousseau this tendency was pathologically developed; he lived throughout the whole of his life in the world of imagination, constructed by his own emotions, more than in reality; his conscience was the conscience of memory or fantasy, which blossomed into fine words but did not fructify into acts if there was any difficulty attached to them, and the suffering he brought on himself by re-living his mood of remorse over his rascality toward Marion received a double reward in the emotion he felt at his own strong and beautiful feelings and in the joy he had in expressing them in telling phrases. These spiritual processes certainly have no, or only a very slight, moral value; but nevertheless they are something more than the ordinary *habileté* of an advocate, and they are considerably more complex.¹

When Rousseau left the Countess de Vercellis' house, he took up lodgings once more at his old place, and lived there for a month or two without seeking employment. He was now at the most critical age, about sixteen, and was the victim of the usual symptoms; he sighed and dreamed and was absent-minded; his imagination swarmed with erotic fancies which, as usual, took an abnormal course; his perverse tendencies expressed themselves so violently that he was several times guilty of such conspicuous performances that he just escaped the grasp of the Turin police. But his inflamed fancy found a healthy counterpoise in an acquaintance he had made while at Mme. Vercellis'. This was a Savoyard clergyman called Gaime. He was the first thoroughly cultured and mature personality that had crossed Rousseau's path—a man of well-balanced poise, who really could and did help him, although the fruits of this did not appear until later. Up to this time Rousseau had always oscillated between extremes—either a hero or a good-for-nothing, either

¹ Cf. William Henry Hudson: *Rousseau and Naturalism in Life and Thought*. Edinburgh, 1903, p. 17, where, after a short account of the story of Marion, we read: "It is some satisfaction to a sentimental moralist to make rhetorical amends for an actual crime."

Achilles or Thersites, as he says. Gaime awakened in him the power of self-criticism—without sparing him, but without taking away his courage; he was not chary of praising him for his good qualities, but he also drew attention to the many dangerous possibilities dwelling in his nature. At the same time, he gave him a saner impression of life, taught him to prize the things of more lasting worth that depend on oneself and that are not at the mercy of the vagaries of life; and he also, to a certain extent, checked his exaggerated admiration for worldly things. Gaime was, in great part, the model for “le vicaire savoyard,” whose “creed,” a generation later, was to move the hearts of mankind more than anything else Rousseau wrote. He had sown a fruitful seed in Rousseau’s heart, but for the moment it lay latent—for a long time without any visible signs of germination.

In the meantime, he was soon to secure a new situation. The Count de la Roque sent for him one day and said that he had found something for him, and his opening words were so promising that Rousseau began to dream of great things; but at last it turned out that he was to be given a place once more as a servant. “Quoi! toujours laquais! me dis-je en moi-même avec un dépit amer . . .” This time, however, he was spared the humiliation of wearing a livery, and was treated with the greatest consideration. But nevertheless he was a lackey, ate with the other servants and waited at table. It was a very distinguished master he had got—Count Gouvon of the well-known and ancient Italian noble family of Solar. Of course, Jean Jacques had soon started his usual little romance, but this time it was pure fantasy on his part. The heroine was the daughter of the count’s son, the beautiful Mlle. de Breil: Rousseau was completely enraptured, trembled and became idiotic when in her company, spilled water on the tablecloth when he was filling her glass, but hardly succeeded in getting a glance from her supercilious eyes. But there were others in the house who did take notice of him, and one day he experienced a proud moment—he got an opportunity, while serving at table, to

show that he was more than an ordinary servant, that he was a young man with both learning and understanding.

This occasion led to his being put into the hands of Abbé Gouvon, the son of the house, who undertook his education, taught him Latin, and tried to fill in some of the many holes that his desultory reading and casual instruction had left. Abbé Gouvon was an extremely cultivated young man, and had had a thorough education; like so many younger sons of the nobility, he had been designed for the Church, but theology did not interest him, and he had thrown himself into the study of "*belles-lettres*," for which he showed great partiality. He took great pains to teach Rousseau Latin and make him familiar with classic literature, and, in addition, used him as secretary: by this he not only acquired an excellent knowledge of pure Italian, but also formed a taste for Italian literature, which we shall see later was not without significance in his own productivity.

From the treatment he received in Count Gouvon's house Rousseau concluded, and with some right, that they intended him for some higher calling, something more than lackey; and, of course, the future that his fancy painted in this connection was no ordinary one. Nevertheless, he was not entirely pleased with the conditions—the road to fortune led through a much too extended and troublesome period of preparation, and he had always imagined that the kingdom was to come to him by a sudden miracle, and preferably in connection with a princess. His future prospects in Count Gouvon's house were certain but distant, and quite lacking in the spice of adventure. It was therefore very natural for him to flee from the whole thing.

He had come across a young Genevan in Turin, a man named Bâcle, who had been in apprenticeship with him at the detested Ducommun's. Bâcle was amusing, gay, and full of droll jokes. It was not so very cheerful in the old count's house; there were no young people to go about with, and it was therefore very natural that he found pleasure in the company of this young ruffian of his own age. But it was

in this case the same as always with Rousseau—he could never hold himself within bounds. There was soon no one else in the world for him except Bâcle; the latter visited him late and early at the count's house until they became tired of him and forbade his coming. But then Rousseau began to spend much time away from the house; he neglected his duty, his work, his study hours, in order to be with his new idol. As might be expected, his employers could not continue to be pleased with such a servant, and it was hinted that he would be dismissed if things should not change. But these warnings were not so unwelcome to Rousseau as one had thought. Bâcle was expecting to leave soon for home, and it occurred to Rousseau that it was not necessary for him to travel alone. Not that he thought for one moment of returning to Geneva—that he would not was the one thing of which he was quite certain; but the memory of his trip over the Alps rose before him; he saw before him the mountains, the fields, the woods, the streams, the villages; what a joy to take this trip again, and in company with a comrade of the same age; to escape from every duty, to wander—wander unconcerned,—without thought of a destination; to be able to stop where he would, or proceed when he would. He thought it would be madness to let this chance slip just on account of some paltry ambitious plans, whose consummation was in the far distance, and which were, moreover, uncertain and burdensome, and, when all was said, hardly worth one hour of the untrammelled joy of youth. And, besides, his life for some time had been painfully lacking in the female element; Mme. Basile had gone out of his life, and Mlle. de Breil was and continued to be unapproachable; but at the bottom of his heart floated the tempting vision of his motherly friend in Annécý, the distant goal at the end of this long, long journey. Rousseau's will was still in a quite rudimentary state, but his inclinations, intensified by the hallucinations of his irresistible fantasy, were that much more violent.

He was soon full of plans for his trip; nothing in the

world could have held him back now. He succeeded without difficulty in acting so that he was summarily dismissed; and so, like the boor he was, he left Count Gouvon's house, where they had looked after him with so much care, without even bidding farewell to the old Count, or thanking the Abbé for the trouble he had wasted on him.

But the two youths met gay and light-hearted, rejoicing in what they were about to undertake. They did not have much money, but they put their trust in a circulating fountain which Jean Jacques had got as a gift from Abbé Gouvon; they thought that when they should blow in it and the water should spout into the air to the amusement of the surprised peasants, they would not be called upon to pay board and lodgings. And so they started off—two beggars of the purest water.

"Thus," says Rousseau, "I abandoned without a sigh my protector, my teacher, my studies, my hopes and expectations of an almost certain future, to begin the true life of a vagabond. Farewell capital, farewell castle, ambition, vanity, beautiful women, and all the great adventures of which I had dreamed last year. I started off with my fountain, with my friend Bâcle, with a light purse, but my heart swelling with joy, and I thought of nothing more than the blessings of wandering to which I had suddenly limited all my brilliant plans."

Nor were his hopes disappointed, for no life was more after Rousseau's own heart than to wander thus without a thought for the morrow; but still things went a little differently from what they had imagined. The fountain did not come up to their expectations; they exhibited its wonders, and they never failed to have success with the miracle, but the innkeepers demanded their money just the same. So it was no great misfortune when it one day went to pieces; on the contrary, they had become thoroughly tired of it, and took the mishap with great gaiety. But the lack of money forced them to make their route shorter than they calculated, and one fine day they found themselves in Chambéry in

ragged clothes and worn-out shoes. For the first time Rousseau began to nourish scruples, not of remorse over his stupidity—that did not occur to him—but of anxious excitement as to how Mme. de Warens would receive him.

He had indeed written to her about the amiable interest which the Gouvon family had taken in him, and she had answered, giving him wise advice as to how he should act so as not to spoil his good fortune. There was no reason for believing that she would receive him with unalloyed joy when he should return to her once more in destitution. And he was not coming alone either. He saw that he must manage to get rid of Bâcle, and so on the last day he began to act with noticeable coolness towards his friend. Rousseau had feared that he would be insulted by this inconstancy, but nothing could insult Bâcle, he understood what was the matter, and as soon as they came to Annécy he said, "Now you are at home," bade him farewell, bounded off, and disappeared from Rousseau's life for ever.

It was with trembling excitement that Rousseau approached Mme. de Warens' house. He was quite convinced that she would not dismiss him, but he had no reason for thinking that he would be especially welcome, and although for his own part he had not the least qualm of conscience over the lightness with which he had run away from Gouvon, yet he knew quite well that it was not in accordance with his friend's ideas. In a way he was returning like the prodigal son.

And this was his reception also; his confidence in Mme. de Warens' good heart had not been misplaced. She received him affectionately and without surprise. He heard her say to one of the inmates of the house—"One may say what one will, but since Providence sends him back to me, He means that I shall keep him." It was decided also that at first he should live in her house.

And so he had come into harbour—temporarily.

It was hardly a year since he had left the dear house in Annécy to set out for Turin, but a great deal had happened

in that year. Many an impression had stamped itself on his soul; he had seen much, he had met many kinds of people, he had lived under many dissimilar conditions, but no change, no transformation had taken place in him. In most respects he was the same as when he was in apprenticeship at Ducommun's, and followed his *penchant à dégénérer*; he stole, he lied, he was at the mercy of impulses, and let himself be driven without thinking of interfering systematically in his own fate, or of exercising any self-control, or of making any effort, or of fulfilling any other duties than those that stern necessity forced upon him. Nevertheless his experiences of this year were of great, indeed to a certain extent of decisive, significance in his development; for although at the moment they did not take the form of increased wisdom of life by which he might profit, yet they stratified in his soul and lay dormant there—a fund for which he was to find use many years later.

This is quite in keeping with Rousseau's peculiar psychological make-up. You remember the passage that I recently quoted where he spoke of his moral instinct, which often failed him at the crucial moment, but which indemnified itself later by judging him so sternly in retrospect. This is not only peculiar to his moral life, but something very similar is present in his spiritual life. He says in one place¹ that it is constantly occurring with him that he goes about among people and places without seeing or hearing anything that happens or being conscious of anything; it seems as though impressions rush across the membranes of his sense-organs without penetrating them at the moment, but afterwards, often long afterwards, the

¹ "I have studied men, and I consider myself a very good observer; however, I do not know how to see that which I do see; I do not see well anything except what I remember, and I have no wit except in my memories. Of all that which one says to me, of all that that one does, of all that takes place in my presence I feel nothing, I penetrate nothing; the exterior sign is all that strikes me. But later all of it returns to me. I remember the place, the time, the tone, the look, the gesture, the circumstance, nothing escapes me,—therefore from what one has done or said I find out what one has thought, and it is very seldom that I am mistaken."

pictures rise with a clearness and precision that make him able to reproduce them in every detail. This is not the case with Rousseau alone; there are several authors who have experienced the same thing. Jonas Lie is a marvellous example; he went about in the world apparently both deaf and blind; impressions did not become sharp until they were far off; the intimate quality of his poetry is due to his visionary memory.

In the light of these considerations we can understand that impressions and experiences which passed over Rousseau's soul, though apparently leaving no trace, nevertheless were not wasted, but later became of great significance to him. When, in making him a lackey in the house of Madame Vercellis or Count Gouvon, Fate had led him to the brink of the social abyss, he did not seem at the time to have been particularly troubled by rebellious feelings, although he naturally would have preferred to sit at the table with the distinguished people instead of serving them; but many years later, when social questions and class-distinctions began to occupy his thoughts, the memory of this lackey period of his youth rose before his eyes with a clearness and a violence that ordinary people only feel during the experience itself, and gave his words the bitterness and intensity that is the secret of their force and the secret of the certainty with which they reached the hearts of the lower classes. If Rousseau had never been a lackey he could not have written his *discours* on inequality.

Something similar may be also said of that wealth of nature-pictures which he assimilated on his long wanderings to and fro over the mountains. What he felt at the moment was nothing more than joy over his independence and unalloyed pleasure in the beauty of the landscape, and it did not occur to him that such emotions may have their uses. However, these impressions never disappeared, but later united with many others and became a rich reservoir, a treasure-chamber full of living pictures of memory, which not only entered as important elements into his conception

of life, but also became the foundation for his epoch-making position in regard to the development of feeling for nature, —a position which influenced the literature and art of the entire world.

Neither did Gaime's wisdom of life nor Abbé Gouvon's instruction leave any visible traces on Rousseau's soul at the time; but when he several years later awakened to a consciousness of self and began to formulate rules for his life's conduct, he remembered the learning of these men, and used it as a profitable foundation for his self-education and self-instruction.

So even though Rousseau on his return from Italy seemed intellectually and morally the same as before on all essential points, nevertheless on the threshold of his consciousness several new elements were present, latent possibilities which were to be revealed later.

For us who are trying to trace the origin and development of this marvellous mind, it is of great importance to be attentive to such small beginnings, otherwise his awakening comes upon us with a miraculous and absolutely inexplicable suddenness.

VIII.

IN HARBOUR—TEMPORARILY.

So the young vagabond was once more under a roof; he had his own bed and could go to a laden table; everything was provided without any effort on his part. Every morning when he arose he was charmed anew at seeing green trees instead of the grey streets and hideous house-roofs that had been his daily view for many years. And to be in Mme. de Warens' company for hours at a time! Of course, his heart was already aflame; it is true that in 'Confessions' he tries to make out that his feelings had nothing to do with the sensual or the erotic, but everything he himself tells gives strong evidence of the contrary. He cannot live out of her presence, his thoughts are occupied with her day and night, he kisses his bed because she may have lain in it, the curtains and furniture in his room because she may have touched them with her beautiful hands, even the floor because she has trodden upon it. And if he tells the truth she, on her side, carried her flirtation with her seventeen-year-old ward rather far; she joked with him, teased him, egged him on and inflamed him with her "motherly" kisses and caresses. We know what sort of stuff Jean Jacques was made of, and cannot feel much confidence in the long-drawn-out subtleties by which he tries to represent the relation between them as something remarkable and unique, neither friendship nor love, and yet both friendship and love. He was as much in love as he could be, and she amused herself

with him, although she considered him still too young to become her lover. That was to come too.

Nevertheless Mme. de Warens was no ordinary empty coquette; she had intellectual interests, and in spite of her casualness and lack of concentration must be called a cultured woman; at least she was much superior to all the women Rousseau had met heretofore. Her favourite authors were Bayle, the great doubter and critical initiator of the enlightened age, and Saint-Evremond, an irreverent iconoclast, one of Voltaire's forerunners,—a choice that is not a disadvantageous witness of her intelligence, but, on the other hand, does not point toward the religious advancement one might expect from a woman who had recently gone over to a new faith.

Rousseau found books in his room—a French translation of Addison's 'Spectator,' Barbeyrac's French edition of Pufendorf's 'Duties of Man and Citizen,' Voltaire's 'Henriade'—and he read during his leisure hours, that is to say, when he was not under the spell of his mistress's caresses. He was considerably more mature than when he had emptied La Tribu's shelves in Geneva; Abbé Gouvion's instruction was beginning to bear fruit in a small way, he no longer devoured books, but thought over the contents, and his literary instinct caused him unconsciously to notice the form, the stylistic peculiarities, the purity of the language, and his own provincialisms.

Sometimes he talked with Mme. de Warens about what he read, and this was an inexpressible pleasure to him; they also read certain books together, notably La Bruyère, whom she preferred to La Rochefoucauld, who in his contempt for mankind was too depressing, especially to young people. La Bruyère's 'Characters' was just the book for her, for she had been about in the world and boasted of being somewhat of a student of human nature. These readings would sometimes furnish her with an occasion for extensive expositions of the subjects in hand and moral sermons, which sometimes bored Jean Jacques, "but, if I could kiss her mouth or

her hands from time to time, I recovered patience and her tediousnesses no longer bored me."

Several weeks went by thus in an agreeable *dolce far niente*, but this idyl could not last for ever; Jean Jacques was now seventeen years old, and it was high time for him to undertake something serious and become a self-supporting man. At this time (the spring of 1729) Mme. de Warens received a visit from one of her relatives, a M. D'Aubonne, an intriguer, but an intelligent man, whom she consulted in regard to the future of her *protégé*. D'Aubonne interviewed Rousseau for several days in succession, said nothing to him in regard to his intentions, but questioned him, induced him to talk, and got as much out of him as he could. The result of his investigation was discouraging; Jean Jacques did not give much promise, in spite of his intelligent face; he was, while not exactly an idiot, absolutely untalented and limited in all directions. He might try to become a country clergyman,—that was about the best he could hope for. This was the account that D'Aubonne gave Mme. de Warens.

This was the second time in his life that Rousseau had got such a recommendation, and it was not to be the last. He himself tries to explain how it was that he could have been judged thus time after time during his life: "for," he says with a smile, "it is hardly to be expected that I should seriously agree with the judgment."

He thinks that it came from the fact that two almost incompatible qualities were united in him: on the one side an inflammable temperament, violent even tempestuous passions; on the other hand a sluggish intelligence, slowly evolved thoughts, which almost always rose after the occasion for them had passed. It seems almost as if his heart and his head did not belong to the same person. "Feeling comes quicker than a flash and fills my soul; but instead of enlightening me it burns me and confuses me! I become enthusiastic but silly; and my blood must cool before I can think. . . .

"This tardiness of thought in connection with violence of feeling does not express itself in conversation only; I experience it also when I am alone and when I work. It is with inconceivable difficulty that my thoughts become systematised in my head; they wander about, they ferment and set my brain in motion; they excite me and make my heart beat; and under all this emotion I see nothing clearly. I am not able to write down a single word, but must wait. Then this strong emotion begins to quiet down imperceptibly, the chaos clears up, everything finds its place, but slowly and after long-continued confusion."

His manuscripts are living examples of this condition; they are full of erasures, additions, and expansions that are absolutely illegible. They must be written again and again before they go to press. But this confusion finds still stronger expression in his association with others; he is not capable of concentrating his thoughts on the subject of conversation, he answers blindly, stammers, becomes confused, and spoils the favourable impression his intelligent face has made, so it is not so inexplicable that he was taken for a blockhead time after time by people who, as a rule, understood how to judge their fellow-creatures correctly.

Although the position of country clergyman was no brilliant future to look to, nevertheless there was nothing else in sight, and Mme. de Warens decided to prepare her young friend for theology. Obediently, but with a heavy heart, Rousseau left his paradise in the house of his beloved and moved over to the seminary of the Lazarites to be prepared in the necessary sciences. The transition was dreadful, and matters were not bettered by his having a teacher at first who filled him with detestation and repulsion to such a degree that he lost all courage and was about to sink into a state of misery. Fortunately the rector of the institute, M. Gros, discovered how matters stood and gave him another tutor to direct his studies. His name was Gâtier, and he left an indelible impression on his pupil's mind as an amiable, warm-hearted, and affectionate man, combining in his nature

considerable intelligence with a tender circumspection that won Jean Jacques' heart on the spot.

When Rousseau was writing 'Émile,' the memory of this man was in his mind, and, together with Gaime, he furnished the model for the Savoyard vicar, who is a composite picture of these two teachers of his youth.

But in spite of the pains that Gâtier took with him, Rousseau did not progress much. He was not made so that he could learn from a teacher; his unbridled and undisciplined mind could never bend under the yoke of the moment, and, like so many prominent men, he lacked every quality to make him a good pupil. "Mon esprit veut marcher à son heure. Il ne peut se soumettre à celle d'autrui."¹

After four or five months' stay at the seminary (from Easter to August 1729) his teachers gave up all hope of him, and he was sent back to Mme. de Warens as a specimen not even capable of becoming a clergyman; "but a good boy and not a vicious one."

When Jean Jacques had moved over to the seminary, he had taken with him a book which he had borrowed from his mistress—a work on music. Mme. de Warens had had some musical instruction, she sang tolerably and played a little on the piano; she had taught him a little, not more than eight or ten hours, however, and he had not even learned to read notes, but he was passionately fond of music and had tried to practise alone. The work he had taken with him was none too easy—it was Clérambault's cantatas; but Jean Jacques, who was so backward in school and could not learn either Latin or theology, nevertheless managed, with practically no foundation, to decipher and to sing through a large number of these cantatas without a mistake.

That was about all he had learned at the seminary, and so it occurred to Mme. de Warens that she might make a musician of this unsuccessful theologian. A fitting oppor-

¹ Cf. livre 4, where he speaks of his lessons in music with Le Maître: "Six months was, of itself, too little time for me to learn much, but in addition to this I worked under a teacher."

tunity presented itself. There lived in Annécý a young musician who directed the chapel at the Latin school, and who came often to Mme. de Warens' house. His name was Le Maître. He was a happy and lively Parisian, not particularly wise, but good and kind in his way. Rousseau went to board with him, and stayed for half a year, the winter of 1730, which he always remembered with great pleasure. He sang choruses and duets, and had his small triumphs, which flattered his vanity extremely; in addition to this, Le Maître's dwelling was only a few steps from Mme. de Warens', so he could run in to her without difficulty. He thought of the seminary without a moment's regret, and had a feeling that he had at last come into his proper sphere; whether Le Maître was the proper man to teach him anything systematic is another question; at any rate he did not have the opportunity of initiating him very deeply into the secrets of music, for this period of learning also soon came to an abrupt and unexpected end.

Le Maître had a decidedly artistic temperament, he belonged to the *genus irritabile*; he got into trouble with the choir-master, who was a nobleman, and treated the bourgeois artist (who, it must be acknowledged, was also a drunkard) with scornful superciliousness. Le Maître, who would not suffer this, decided to run away from the whole thing, and in order to avenge himself he formed the plan of taking all the music books with him, so that the choirmaster would be in a plight now that Easter was approaching. Mme. de Warens at first tried to persuade him from it, but not being successful in this, decided to help him as well as she could, and ordered Jean Jacques to accompany him in his flight.

So they set off with their stolen goods, and Rousseau proved himself at first to be a daring and clever assistant. When they arrived at Seyssel, the first station on their route, they carried out Rousseau's proposal and went boldly to a M. Reydelet, a canon of St Peter's Church, and introduced themselves to him. He was really the very man from whom they should have hidden themselves, but they con-

cocted a number of audacious lies which Rousseau, in spite of his disgust for falsehood, told very fluently; they were treated with great hospitality, were given excellent food, comfortable beds, and separated as the best of friends. They continued their journey, using similar methods as they proceeded, and were always highly amused at the success of their tricks—until they came to Nyon.

There Le Maître, who suffered from epilepsy, had an attack on the street, and when a crowd collected, drawn by Rousseau's cries for help, the latter took advantage of the opportunity and slipped away. This was the last he ever saw of the man whose assistant he had undertaken to be.

We see he is still the same as when he was in Turin; he is not troubled by moral scruples, or by natural chivalrousness; his own pleasure and comfort are the law of his life. If he can slip away unnoticed from an unpleasant duty he does so. It is not only his passions that silence his moral instinct—in this case he could not even use his sense of shame as an excuse. He had simply become tired of his companion with his inconvenient epileptic fits—for this was not the first one. It does not occur to him for one moment, to Jean Jacques, the warm-hearted, tender lover of his fellow-creatures, that this poor man needed him especially now that he was sick and helpless. No, Jean Jacques was his father's own son; he avoided things that were tiresome or troublesome, but regaled himself later with beautiful feelings, which arose too late to show any practical results. In 'Confessions' he upbraids himself many times for his behaviour towards Le Maître, and suffers under the same convenient retrospective remorse that he felt when he confessed the story of Marion.

IX.

A VAGABOND.

WHEN Rousseau, in this easy and contemptible way, had got rid of the responsibility that he had undertaken towards Le Maître, he once more set out on foot to Annécý, which had become the central point to which he always returned after all his surprising departures. But when he arrived he found the nest empty; Mme. de Warens and Claude Anet had gone to Paris without leaving any address or date for their home-coming.

There he stood once more, penniless, helpless and homeless. He went to his friend Venture and asked permission to live with him. Venture was Rousseau's latest idol, and therefore—I was about to say—not exactly one of God's children. One winter evening, when Rousseau was still boarding with Le Maître, a knock had been heard on the door, and a traveler had entered in a very wretched condition. He had introduced himself as a French musician fallen upon evil days, who needed food and shelter. Venture de Villeneuve was the euphonious name he gave himself. Le Maître was filled with joy at being able to help a man who was both a Frenchman and a musician. They sat down at the supper-table, and the stranger was extremely loquacious. He delivered himself on the subject of music with great assurance; there was not a work, not a singer, not a beautiful lady or distinguished man with whom he was not on familiar terms; there was not a subject in which he was not at home. He talked dashingly, fluently, and entertainingly about every-

thing between heaven and earth; but he took good care not to go deeper into the subjects on any point. Rousseau was absolutely stupefied by so much wit, elegance, and worldly wisdom, and, with that affinity for bad company which had always marked him, he immediately fell prostrate before this new star which had so unexpectedly risen in Annécý's heaven. He and Venture were soon inseparable. Of course he was anxious to have his mistress share his enthusiasm, and he got permission to bring him to her house. But Mme. de Warens, though as a rule not fastidious, saw through this adventurer with the dashing name, and refused to have anything more to do with him. She warned Jean Jacques earnestly against him—in fact, Rousseau thought, when she sent him away with Le Maître, that it was chiefly to get him out of Venture's pernicious society.¹

Venture got on very well in the little Savoyard town, for Rousseau was not the only one upon whom he imposed. He had soon created for himself a position both as musician and society man in the town, and he had remained there. Jean Jacques did not knock at his door in vain—Venture gave him shelter and helped him in many ways, but he could not support him entirely, and so Jean Jacques had to seek other haunts in addition. Mme. de Warens' house was not closed; she had left behind her maid, Mlle. Merceret, a kind and pleasant and very good-looking girl, whom Rousseau constantly visited and with whom he took his meals. He made other female acquaintances here also, among whom he would have enjoyed himself extremely had it not been for a Mlle. Giraud, a rather elderly woman, who fell dead in love with him, but whose forbidding looks made her advances extremely annoying.

But although Rousseau might content himself temporarily

¹ He certainly was mistaken in this. Mme. de Warens, just at this time, was about to undertake a trip to Paris on an extremely questionable political errand, and it was on that account that she was anxious to get Jean Jacques out of the way. Compare Mugnier's *Mad. de Warens et J. J. Rousseau*, pp. 83-102.

with these lower class companions, in his dreams he always moved in quite different social spheres. One day he experienced a short fulfilment of such a dream, and it became the material of one of the most beautiful passages to be found in 'Confessions.' All who have read this book will remember that summer morning in 1730 when Rousseau wandered abroad to see the sun rise and to listen to Nature's music, and as he wandered was surprised by the laughter of two young girls who came on horseback from behind him. He helped them to cross the river, and therewith the acquaintance of Mlle. Galley and Mlle. Graffenried was made. He was invited to take a seat behind Mlle. Galley, and the three gay, happy young people went galloping away through a part of the world's most beautiful scenery. Strangely enough, Rousseau had no eyes for it this time; he was probably too much occupied with the maidens. They arrived at Thônes, a farm belonging to the Galley family; they had the house to themselves, they cooked their food, chattering gaily; they wandered in the garden, where Jean Jacques climbed up in the cherry tree and threw cherries down to the girls, who pelted him with the stones, laughing and jesting. There was not a pause, not a moment of silence; the hours fled, and before they knew it evening had fallen. The little cavalcade set off again and were soon in town, and their beautiful day was at an end. It became for Rousseau a never-to-be-forgotten memory, which he often recalled, and which he has succeeded in making memorable for his readers also—a picture of summer and youth and charming, innocent freshness.

When Rousseau went to bed that evening two flames burned in his soul; the one for Mlle. Graffenried was pale and still, but the one for Mlle. Galley was the real one—hot and fluttering. The following day, and many times afterwards, he walked near her house in the hope of catching a glimpse of her, and, as it was in vain, he wrote to her, nor did he spurn to use the swarthy Mlle. Giraud as *postillon d'amour*.

In the meantime the days went by and Mme. de Warens

remained away, Rousseau's position became more and more precarious, and Mlle. Merceret also became impatient. It had not occurred to her mistress that the servants had to have something to live on in her absence, and her maid therefore decided to go home to her father, who was a musician of Freiburg. But she was afraid to travel alone, and Mlle. Giraud proposed that Rousseau should accompany her, and he was quite willing. Anne Marie Merceret had very little money, and Rousseau had none, so they decided to go on foot. It was a several days' march from Geneva to Freiburg, and this was another temptation to our vagabond. The road from Annécý to Freiburg passes through Nyon, and, naturally, Jean Jacques stopped to see his father. The meeting, of course, was touching. Rousseau, in 'Confessions,' exclaims: "What tears we shed when we embraced," and this is quite in keeping with the characters of both. But, nevertheless, they did not arrive at a reconciliation; on the contrary, Isaac Rousseau, who in spite of everything was an earnest Calvinist and proud of being a citizen of Geneva, could not forgive his son for his apostasy and the loss of citizenship that went with it. Jean Jacques does not say a word about this in 'Confessions,' but, from a letter written shortly afterwards to his father, we learn that the latter had repudiated him in violent language, and would no longer call him son.¹ Neither did his stepmother seem to have liked him; she invited him to stay and eat supper, but the invitation could not have been particularly pressing, as he refused it and proceeded on his journey.

So he wandered on with his little friend; she was nice and kind and, of course, in love with Rousseau, who was "pained at making so many girls fall in love with me"; she was not obtrusive like Mlle. Giraud but she showed him

¹ "In spite of the sad assurances you gave me that you no longer looked upon me as your son, I dare to return to you, as to the best of fathers." This letter, which was written from Neuchâtel, probably during the summer of 1731, is the oldest of the Rousseau letters that are preserved. In these letters we have access to a new source of information in regard to him—they were, at first, thin and scattered, but later more copious and complete.

in many ways how much she liked him. She was afraid of everything in the world, did not dare to sleep alone at night,—so they always had to sleep in the same room. But if, in making this arrangement, she had had any object, she was disappointed. Rousseau suspected no danger, and when he said goodbye to her in Freiburg, he was the same Joseph as at the beginning of the trip.

Referring to this farewell in 'Confessions' he draws a melancholy sigh in thinking of how his life might have turned out if he had, at that time, settled down with La Merceret and remained in Freiburg. "She had a decided inclination for me; I could certainly have won her and could have joined her father in his work. My love of music would have made this acceptable to me. I would have settled down in Freiburg, a little town, not particularly beautiful, but whose inhabitants were good people. I would have had to renounce many pleasures; but I would have lived in peace to my last hour, and I ought to know better than any one else that there would have been no doubt as to my choice."¹

He delivered Anne Marie to her parents in Freiburg and started on his return journey—not to Nyon, nor to Annécy,

¹ Ducros (p. 60) quotes this complaint and adds a number of observations: "What is interesting to note, *à propos* of this sigh of regret that escapes Rousseau at the moment of parting from his pleasant travelling companion, is not the fact that he was idealising the memories of his youth (we all do that), but that, although at the height of his fame when he wrote this part of 'Confessions,' he expresses regret at not having married La Merceret, a simple chambermaid. And I do not mean to insinuate that I think this regret quite sincere (although I do not consider it a pure lie), nor do I forget Rousseau's overweening pride; but that notwithstanding this very pride and the illustrious friendships he had made, it should have occurred to him, at this period of his life and of his glory, to express so unexpected a regret—this enlightens us more than I can say and more than all he himself has written on the subject of the simplicity (I was about to say vulgarity) of his tastes; and I believe, too, that this helps us to understand why he one day in default of La Merceret decided to marry Thérèse." This logic is not convincing. In the first place, I do not see why this sigh from Rousseau's heart should surprise M. Ducros; it is quite similar to the one with which he closes the first book of 'Confessions' the time he ran away from Geneva. Both are natural expressions of one of Rousseau's chief convictions—especially pre-

but to Lausanne: on the way he had given up his last penny, and even before he came to the town he was obliged to resort to charity. In a little country town near Lausanne he entered an inn, got a good supper, and slept the sleep of the innocent; the next morning, when he was about to proceed with his journey, Jean Jacques offered the innkeeper his coat in payment, but the latter was much too good a man to want to rob his guests; he said that he could wait for the payment. Rousseau was very much touched¹ over this kindness, and says that he paid him back at his first opportunity.

Now that he was in Lausanne, how was he to make his living? He happened to think of his friend Venture, who had made such a career for himself in Annécý as a musician. Should he not try to do the same thing? He equipped himself with a dashing name, transposing the letters in his own and borrowing his friend's surname (although it was not his either) and called himself Vaussore de Villeneuve. He settled down as a music teacher, confident that the musical life here, as in most Protestant towns, was not highly developed. He himself acknowledges that he lacked the simplest qualifications for his new profession, but neverthe-

dominant when he was at the height of honour—namely, that the simple and unpretentious life passed in peace and obscurity is to be preferred infinitely to a brilliantly worldly life full of intrigues. I see no difference between the two passages.

Secondly, it is hardly correct to speak of Rousseau's vulgar tastes in the connections referred to. One is more justified in saying that Jean Jacques—the watchmaker's son, the engraver's apprentice, the vagabond—aimed higher than one should have expected in his relations with women. When he united his fate later with that of Thérèse, there were certainly multitudinous causes and circumstances at play. And, in any case, Rousseau (even after thirty years' union with Thérèse) never ceased to seek friendship and inspiration from the most highly cultured aristocratic ladies of the day.

The nature of his relationship to Thérèse is hardly different from that of Heine to Mathilde or Goethe to Christiane; and, even though some may say that Heine was not free from a certain vulgarity of taste, one could hardly say the same of Goethe.

¹ On this occasion also, his gratitude was greater in retrospect than at the time: "I was touched by his kindness, but less so than I should have been and less so than I became later in remembering it."

less this did not prevent his undertaking still more audacious things. There lived in Lausanne a professor of law, de Treytorens, who was very much interested in music and occasionally arranged concerts in his home. Rousseau was introduced to this amateur and wanted to give him a sample of his accomplishments, so that he might become known in the town. And so he sat down and composed something for the concert. He wrote out the parts for the different voices and distributed them with an important air. It was all absolutely worthless, with the exception of a minuet he had learned from Venture and which he gave out as original and put as a finale to his masterpiece.

The evening of the concert arrived. Jean Jacques rises—most impressive, with a roll of paper in his hand—raps three times on the music rack, swings his baton, and the instruments strike up. The musicians almost choked with laughter, the hearers stared in bewilderment—such cat-music had never been heard before! Jean Jacques had to empty his bitter cup to the bottom; the musicians were too much amused to omit a single bar; there he stood in a cold perspiration and swung his paper roll until they at last came to the stolen minuet and then the laughter burst forth unrestrained from every corner of the room, for every one of them without exception knew this melody.

This *début* naturally was no favourable introduction to his career as a musician; not one of the town's people came to him; his only prey was a couple of fat Germans who were just as stupid as he was ignorant, and—to his great sorrow—not a single female pupil appeared.

He had plenty of time to wander about sighing on the banks of Lake Geneva, which, after all, had been the real attraction that brought him to Lausanne. His melancholy thoughts wandered to the dear Mme. de Warens, whose home was in this district. There was a certain charm in going about these streets where she had strolled in her time, to stop before that house where she may have once lived, and he made a two-days' excursion to Vevey where she had been

born. The Lake of Geneva was for all time an ineradicable picture in his mind. He found here the scenery that was most sympathetic to his soul, and here also were those places—Vevey, Clarens, La Meillerie—which he was one day by his great romance to make world-famous Meccas for all lovers.

In the meantime, his position in Lausanne was soon absolutely untenable, and so he packed his goods and chattels and wandered to Neuchâtel, where he continued his music teaching during the winter of 1730-31. He had now, he says, gradually learned something about music by teaching others, and he was a little more successful with pupils here than in Lausanne. Indeed a modest man would have been quite satisfied with his circumstances, he thinks; but they answered in no way to his dreams of greatness, and it must have been very pleasant for him when he by chance formed a connection which was brightened by the spirit of adventure.

One day he went into an inn to eat dinner, and his attention became drawn to a man who looked extremely remarkable: huge beard, a violet Greek costume, a fur cap—on the whole a most impressive figure. He talked a strange language, which no one in the house understood. Rousseau pricked up his ears and noticed that it was something like Italian. He addressed some words to him in this language, and the man rose and embraced him with delight. Jean Jacques took a seat at his table, which was provisioned considerably more abundantly than his own, and they were soon deep in confidential conversation. The stranger said he was a Greek prelate and archimandrite of Jerusalem, and was travelling about to collect money for the restoration of the Holy Sepulchre. He showed Rousseau documents from the Emperor and Czarina, and said that, up to that time, he was very well satisfied with the proceeds of his trip. Before the meal was finished Rousseau was the archimandrite's satellite. He took a position as interpreter for the mysterious Greek, and was to make speeches all

over Switzerland for the cause of the Holy Sepulchre; the distant goal of the journey was Jerusalem itself. But Jean Jacques was not to get as far as this. They went first to Freiburg, where the proceeds were rather slight; sufficient, however, for Rousseau, who for a long time had been obliged to live very meagrely, to satisfy his young appetite and win back the flesh that he had lost. From Freiburg they followed the road to Berne, where the "embarrassed" Rousseau, as he never failed to call himself, had to make a speech offhand and unprepared before the assembled Senate; and he did not speak badly, but was very eloquent on the subject of the good cause at stake; he spoke of the noble generosity that several sovereigns had shown, and said that he was convinced that the people of Berne would not be second in this noble race. The speech was very successful; the Bernese proved very open-handed, and the archimandrite and his secretary, pleased with their booty, proceeded to Soleure.

But here the beautiful mission came to an abrupt end. The first thing they did was to pay a visit to the French ambassador, M. de Bonac, and, as luck would have it, he had formerly been ambassador to Constantinople and was perfectly familiar with everything concerning the Holy Sepulchre. The archimandrite had a short audience to which Rousseau was not admitted, as the ambassador spoke Italian. When the Greek came out, Rousseau was about to follow him but he was stopped. He had represented himself to be a Frenchman, and therefore came under the jurisdiction of the French ambassador. When he was alone with M. de Bonac he fell on his knees and told him his whole story. The ambassador was touched by it and led him to his wife, who received him cordially. He asked for permission to say farewell to his Greek, but this was denied him. His travelling bag was brought to the embassy, where he was temporarily installed. The secretary of the legation accompanied him to his room, and as he bade him good-night said pleasantly and gallantly: "A famous man of the same name

as you once slept in this room. Whether you will ever come to occupy his position, so that one may say Rousseau the first and Rousseau the second, depends upon yourself alone."

We can guess how this must have flattered Jean Jacques' vanity; he became curious and began to read the poems of Jean Baptiste Rousseau, and immediately tried to imitate him in a cantata in honour of Mme. de Bonac. This is the first time we hear of Rousseau's appearing as author or poet. From a letter written a month or two later to Mlle. Giraud,¹ it appears that he had already begun to dream of himself as a future poet. He offers to send her some of his verses if she should care to have them. "I write with great pleasure but absolutely in secret, for I am not yet vain enough to wish to bear the name of author; I must first reach that point of perfection which will cause me to uphold this dignity with honour."

Two of these first attempts of Rousseau have been preserved (Annals, ii. 193-98)—a cantata and a rhymed letter. They are extremely insignificant and show no promise; they are awkward, servile, and incorrect imitations of Jean Baptiste Rousseau's dry but regular prosodical rhetoric.

Nor did Rousseau ever write verses that lived; the poetic element prevalent throughout his works is always bound within the confines of prose. He himself says in that passage in 'Confessions' in which he refers to his cantata of homage to Mme. de Bonac, that he imagined at the time that he had a "taste for poetry," but he soon lost this desire. "I have, from time to time, written mediocre verses; it is a practice by which one may learn to write better prose; but I have never been sufficiently attracted to French poetry to abandon myself to it entirely." His earliest letters are

¹ This letter, in all editions of Rousseau's correspondence, as well as in all biographies (except Ducros') is said to have been written to Mlle. Grafenried, and Mugnier dates it December 1730. However, Dufour (*Annales Jean Jacques Rousseau*, ii. 165 f.) has proved almost positively that the letter is to Mlle. Giraud, and that it must have been written in the summer of 1731.

more interesting from a literary point of view than his first unfortunate poetical attempts. It is true they are extremely clumsy, and, in certain places, quite incorrect in sentence structure; the difference between his early prose and his later masterpieces shows very clearly the great work and the tremendous development which lie between them; but even here, in his earliest productions, we find several efforts at passionate eloquence, which was to become the most conspicuous characteristic of Rousseau's style in its maturity.

It is not easy to say how long he remained in Soleure after the exposure of the archimandrite; it could not have been many days. Rousseau's account is quite incorrect on this point; he says he went from here direct to Paris, but both the letter to his father, mentioned above, and the letter to Mlle. Giraud, which were written after the affair with the Greek, were sent from Neuchâtel—so he must have gone there from Soleure. But he got none of his music pupils back again, so he sent cries of help to different quarters, to his father, whom he beseeches to send him money; to Bishop de Bernex, in Annécý; and, without doubt, also to the ambassador in Soleure. From his father there was, as usual, no answer and still less help, but the two others interested themselves in him. At the bishop's recommendation he returned to Soleure and then started to Paris, where he was to be tutor for a young M. Godard. "They gave me some letters, a hundred francs for travelling money, much good advice, and off I started."

The fourteen days he spent on this march he counts among the few happy ones of his life; he was once more on the highway, on foot and alone. Alone and yet not alone, for his dreams followed him, and they did not leave him a moment, but, brilliant and certain of consummation, accompanied him as he wandered and built his castles with tower and spire. It only annoyed him when people showed him friendliness or offered him a seat in their carriages, or if any one joined him in his solitude on the highroad; none of them suspected with what brilliant company he

associated when he was allowed to be alone. This time his fantasy was concerned with war and glory—his prospective pupil was the nephew of a colonel, so the direction for his fancies was given. It was undeniably an obstacle that he was so near-sighted, but he had read somewhere that Marshal Schomberg had also suffered from this failing, and so he did not see that that could make any difference to Marshal Rousseau. One thinks involuntarily of Johannes Ewald and his air-castles on his way to the Seven Years' War. "I saw nothing but troops, forts, trenches, batteries—and myself in the midst of smoke and steam quietly dispensing orders, field-glass in hand." It is true that Rousseau afterwards experienced sentimental scruples against the horrors of war, by which Ewald was not in the least troubled.

And so he arrived in Paris. It was a dreadful disappointment. He had imagined a glory beyond dreams, beautiful streets with palaces of marble and gold; he entered by the Faubourg St Marceau, saw nothing but dirty little passages, wretched black houses, uncleanness and poverty; everywhere beggars, street vendors, noise and misery.

For all people the first impression is an important one, but for a man like Rousseau, who was so abnormally receptive, and in whom impressions always became transformed, growing in retrospect, such impressions may become overpowering and decisive. And it is therefore scarcely an exaggeration when he, after having told of his disappointment, adds: "All this struck me to such a degree that whatever real splendour I later saw in Paris was not able to destroy my first impression, and I have always nourished a secret repulsion toward this capital." We know the attitude he afterwards assumed toward Paris, how he was constantly fleeing from this Babylon, how he directed the greater part of his polemic writings against this centre of all the abominations of culture. Of course the numerous experiences which he had later were the real cause of this, but beneath it all lay his first impression as an equally powerful motive, the impression of disappointment over

the yawning abyss between his golden dreams of anticipation and the hideous reality that met his expectant eye when he first entered Paris.

At first he was pleased with the Parisians—they were polite and gracious when he presented his letters of introduction; but he soon discovered that their attractive amiability and goodwill was only a pleasant mannerism, and the corresponding helpfulness and self-sacrifice were not to be discovered. He went away from them with the best hopes but never heard from them again. He was least of all satisfied with Colonel Godard, who proved to be an old miser, and who, when he saw Rousseau's necessity, thought that he could secure his services for nothing. On the whole, he greeted him in such a way that Jean Jacques would have nothing to do either with him or his nephew. Disappointed of this, his only chance for a position, he began to search high and low for Mme. de Warens. He finally learned that she had gone away more than two months before—whither no one knew,—but it was thought that she had gone to Savoy or Turin, or perhaps to Switzerland.

Rousseau started off after her blindly, convinced that he should be able to find her. Before he went away he avenged himself on Colonel Godard by writing a lampoon on him—"the only satirical poem that ever came from my pen. My heart is not malicious enough to make use of such a talent; but I believe that one can see from certain polemics written in my own defence that if I had possessed a belligerent temperament, my opponents would not have had the laugh on their side." This is the second time that Rousseau refers in 'Confessions' to his poetic attempts.

He turned his steps towards Lyons, but as usual did not hasten; he sauntered along so lost in his dreams that he sometimes went astray. One day he went into a peasant's hut to eat dinner. "He offered me skim-milk and coarse barley bread—said that was all he owned. I drank the

milk with delight and ate the bread, straw and all; but this was not particularly strengthening to a man about to swoon from fatigue." A little while afterwards, when the peasant had got more confidence in Jean Jacques, he opened a little trap-door beside the kitchen, disappeared, and came back immediately with a piece of wheat-bread, a delicious ham, and a bottle of wine; an omelet was also prepared, and Rousseau had one of his lordly meals. When he wanted to pay for it the peasant became restless, would not hear a word about money, and acted in a very peculiar way. Rousseau was quite at sea until the peasant began to mumble something about "officers and cellar rats." He made him understand that he hid his bread and wine from the tax-collectors, and that he would be lost if any one got a suspicion that he was not dying of hunger. "Everything he said made a great impression on me, for I had never before had the slightest idea of it—an impression which will never be obliterated. It became the germ of the unquenchable hatred in my heart for the torments which this unhappy people had to endure and for their oppressors. Although this man was well-to-do, he did not dare eat the bread which he had earned by the sweat of his brow, and could avoid ruin only by pretending to be in the same necessity as those that surrounded him. I left his house full of pity and indignation, deeply deploring that this beautiful country upon which nature had lavished her gifts was the prey of barbarous toll-collectors."

I do not understand why one should think, as some have done, that Rousseau was guilty of the least fabrication in relating this experience. His observation corresponds accurately with what other travellers and authors have reported, and certainly is not at all tinged with exaggeration.¹ It is quite natural that he, who came from a country where peasants were free land-owners, should have been strongly impressed by this experience, and that it should have become, if not the only one,

¹ Cf. H. Taine, *L'Ancien Régime*, livre v. ; *Le Peuple*, i. 429-88.

at least one important source of his hatred toward oppression.

In the neighbourhood of Lyons, the stage-setting for 'Astrea,' the famous romance that Rousseau had revelled in as a boy, is to be found, and he now looked forward to wandering on the banks of the river Lignon, to re-live on the spot the experiences of his old hero and heroine; but when he questioned the hostess of the inn about directions, she told him that the place was famous for its iron industry, and his enthusiasm cooled at once; he suddenly lost every desire to seek his dear shepherds and shepherdesses among "a crowd of smiths." If in his experience with the French peasant we can see the source of his future democracy, we can likewise see the beginnings of the future romanticist in his disappointment at finding that industry had made its inroads into the holy and poetic scenery of his favourite romance.

In Lyons he had an old acquaintance, a friend of Mme. de Warens, a Mlle. du Châtelet. She told him that Maman had passed through Lyons, but that she at the time did not know whether she would settle in Savoy or elsewhere. However, she offered to write and find out for him, and in the meantime she advised him to wait at Lyons. He agreed to this but was ashamed to tell her of his poverty. In order to manage on the few coppers which he had in his pocket-book he was often obliged to sleep under the open sky. But he was courageous and young, and his fantasy helped him on many points; he lay "on a bench in the park just as peacefully as on a bed of roses." Indeed, such a night under the stars inspired one of the most beautiful passages in 'Confessions.' One lonely evening he had wandered out on the highroad outside of the town. Terraced gardens bordered the road on the other side of the river. "The day had been very warm, the evening was charming, the dew lay humid on the dry grass; no wind, a tranquil night; the air was fresh without being cold; the sun had gone down but had left reddish vapours

in the sky which were reflected rose-coloured in the water; the trees on the terraces were full of nightingales which answered each other. I walked in a sort of ecstasy, abandoning my senses and my heart to the enjoyment of all this—sighing only with regret at being alone. Absorbed in my sweet dreams, night came on without my feeling that I was tired. I perceived it at last. I ensconced myself voluptuously on the floor of a niche or false entrance in the terrace, the canopy of my bed was formed by the branches of the trees; a nightingale was just above me; its song put me to sleep; my sleep was sweet, my awakening still more so. My eyes met the sun, the water, the verdure, a wonderful landscape. I arose and shook myself, hunger took possession of me, and I started gaily toward town, determined to spend two of my last six lires on breakfast. I was in such a good humour that I went singing the whole way—I even remember that I sang a cantata of Baptistin which I knew by heart.”

His happy morning song was to bring him luck. While he was wandering along toward his breakfast, carolling gaily, he heard a step behind him, turned and saw a man, who greeted him pleasantly and asked if he understood music. They got into conversation. Rousseau told the stranger a little of his history, and they finally agreed that Jean Jacques should accompany him home to copy music for him. In return he was to receive everything he needed, food and shelter.

Rousseau's new acquaintance was a monk of St Anthony, Rolichon, a passionate lover of music, who sang in little concerts which he and his friends held. Jean Jacques sat in a little room from morning till evening copying music, interrupted only by his meals, and these were excellent too. He could not remember ever having had such in his entire life, and they came very opportunely, for he had lived on very meagre fare for a long time now, and was as empty as a gourd. Notwithstanding all his industry, his work was not of the first quality. When they tried to use his music at

the concert it proved to be so full of mistakes—omissions repetitions, transpositions—that no one could play from it. Nevertheless Rolichon was kind to him to the last, and at parting even gave him a few shillings, which he needed sorely. In the meantime, a letter had come from Mme. de Warens; she was in Chambéry now and was willing to receive him—had even sent him travelling money. Jean Jacques was delighted and impatient to get off, but had to remain in Lyons a week longer to execute some commissions for Maman.

During this time he was constantly with Mlle. du Châtelet, who also played a part in his development. She was neither young nor beautiful, so there was no question of infatuation this time, but she was an intelligent woman, who had been about in the world and took a keen interest in studying human nature from a psychological point of view. "And," says Rousseau, "it was through her that my interest for the first time was turned in this direction." Now this is not quite true; he himself has said that Mme. de Warens also had pretensions as a student of human nature, and she loved to entertain him with moral expositions of La Bruyère's 'Caractères.' Mlle. du Châtelet's favourite author was Lesage, who was, in a certain sense, a follower of La Bruyère. La Bruyère was the forerunner, Lesage the creator of what Frenchmen call "le roman de mœurs." Rousseau borrowed 'Gil Blas' from Mlle. du Châtelet, and although he was still too much occupied with "les grands passions" to be ripe for the understanding of the realistic description of life and men in this novel, he nevertheless read it with pleasure, and the reading bore fruits. After a slow and unsystematic intellectual development Rousseau was now approaching that point of maturity which would bring the moment for him to burst into bloom, and every little breeze from outside helped to give the line of direction to his intellectual inclinations. And so in the history of the origin of his interest in physical questions, Mlle. du Châtelet has also her little place.

At last the longed-for moment of departure came, and Rousseau with a light heart wandered off to that dwelling-place which he had so long looked upon as his home. Annécý no longer claimed it, but that made no difference, for it was not the house itself but its inmate that made it so dear to him.

X.

CHAMBÉRY.

IN the spring of 1732¹ we find him in Chambéry with his dear Mme. de Warens, who this time not only received him with her untiring kindness (although, as we have seen in the above-mentioned letter to Mlle. Giraud, there had been a serious shadow between them), but was also trying to secure a situation for him. The King of Sardinia, in order to be able to levy his land tax more systematically and more forcibly, had established a surveyor's office for the purpose of having maps of his provinces made: it was an extensive affair, which occupied two or three hundred men, some of them engineers who worked in the open, some of them office clerks who made the calculations. It was among the latter that Mme. de Warens had, through her influence, secured a position for Rousseau. It was no brilliant career, and the position, of course, was far beneath Rousseau's soaring expectations, but it was sufficient to support him, and Jean Jacques, in any case, had the satisfaction of knowing that he had begun to earn his bread honourably for the first time in his life, as he himself said.

¹ Ducros (p. 72) makes the time the summer of 1731, but this does not agree with his earlier statements. He himself (after Dufour) dates the letter to Mlle. Giraud and the first letter to Rousseau's father the summer of 1731, but both these were written in Neuchâtel immediately after the affair with the Greek archimandrite. After that time Rousseau had been in Soleure, then in Paris, then in Lyons, and judging from the impression we get from 'Confessions,' he spent a good deal of time, not only in these different towns, but also on the journey. It is therefore probable that the date he gives, 1732, is the correct one.

And, besides, he was to live "at home." It is true, the house was a great disappointment, as it was very different from Annécý; there was neither garden nor running brook nor landscape outside his window. All was dark and sad, and his room was the darkest and saddest of the whole house—a house-wall for a view, a cul-de-sac for a street! There was little light, little air, and little room—only crickets, rats, and rotten planks. But what did all this matter when he was to live in her house!

At the head of Mme. de Warens' elaborate household stood Claude Anet. He was an ordinary peasant who had come into the house as a servant, but had gradually advanced to be first Madame's adviser, then her steward, and then—her lover. According to Rousseau's description, Claude Anet was a considerable personality, a man filled with a desire for culture, which expressed itself chiefly in the study of botany, in which he had acquired a great deal of information. But he was above all a strong character. He was not more than five years older than Rousseau and seven years younger than Mme. de Warens, but both of them had the deepest respect for him, and he became for Jean Jacques somewhat of a mentor, in whose presence he unconsciously repressed himself. He was extremely unlike his two companions—slow and tenacious, thoughtful, careful, reserved and rather cold in his manner; but beneath this controlled exterior violent passions burned, passions which consumed him. A short time after Rousseau's arrival he attempted to commit suicide by taking poison. Rousseau affirms that the reason was despair at Mme. de Warens' having spoken harshly to him when angry, but it is more natural to assume that the real cause was jealousy of the newcomer who had acquired such a prominent place in the house and in the heart of his beloved mistress. It was on this occasion that Jean Jacques learned that the relation between Claude Anet and Maman was something more than that of friendship, and, of course, it pained him to find that there was some

one who stood nearer to her than he did. But when he thought things over, he was sure that his highest wish was that she should be happy, and anyhow it was impossible for rivalry or jealousy to flourish in her presence. Her amiability was so great, she created such an atmosphere of goodness about her, that those who loved her involuntarily came to love each other,—it never occurred to them to wish each other ill. And so, in spite of all, an intimate friendship sprang up between Claude Anet and Jean Jacques, and if Anet was really the man that Rousseau represents him to have been, it was certainly no misfortune to live in daily companionship with such a faithful, truth-loving, and self-controlled character.

At first things went very well in the surveyor's office, for the work required attention and for a time occupied his entire mind, but when he had got more into the routine of it and was able to accomplish it automatically, his restlessness came upon him again and he yearned for his studies. His work brought him in contact with mathematics, and although he could get on without higher arithmetic yet he became ambitious in that direction. He bought arithmetic books and studied, and he says "I learned well because I learned by myself." The manner in which he carried out these studies shows us what significant progress he had made in intellectual maturity in the years immediately preceding. It is true the real intellectual awakening had not yet taken place; he did not even know yet what he wanted; he had no remote plans in choosing this subject; mathematics did not particularly satisfy any personally-felt mental need in him, it was only the chance work in the surveyor's office that led him in that direction. But he was now mature enough to demand clearness and depth in the problems that crossed his intellectual horizon, and although it still required an external impetus to interest him in these problems, nevertheless his mind had developed sufficiently for them to give him pure, intellectual pleasure. It was a great satisfaction to him to force his mind to

accurate and clear conceptions by absorbing himself in the laws of numbers, and it flattered his vanity when he succeeded in discovering short cuts to indisputable results. A latent and unconscious attraction that drew him toward mathematics was founded on the connection between this science and music, for music was a sphere in which Rousseau's soul really could find an abode.

In the surveyor's office Rousseau also sometimes got an opportunity to look over the engineers' portfolios, and this gave him a desire to learn to draw; he threw himself into it with great zeal, as was usual when he undertook anything. He dabbled with brush and pencil so perseveringly that his health suffered, and at length his motherly providence had to put an end to it. But it appears that he was absolutely without talents in this direction, so his feverish industry accomplished nothing.

It is strange that he showed no interest in botany while at Chambéry, for in his old age this was his chief passion. One might have expected this subject to attract his nature-loving eye, and besides, Claude Anet was almost a professional. He and Mme. de Warens often made botanical excursions together, but Rousseau only made fun of these studies. He himself thought that the reason he could not share his companions' interest in botany was that it was indissolubly connected with medicine; what occupied them was not the plants for their own sakes, but chiefly for the curative qualities to be found in them, and this never attracted Rousseau's interest at any period of his life.

It was at this time that Rousseau's attention became drawn to politics and public matters, though not to the sociological questions that he was to attack later in so revolutionary a manner. On the 18th of October 1733 France declared war on Austria, the King of Sardinia became involved, and French troops passed through Savoy on their way to Lombardy. Rousseau sided passionately with the French, was one of them heart and soul. He had just read Brantôme's '*Vies des Hommes illustres et des grands Cap-*

itaines français et étrangers,' and his head was full of names and deeds from France's proud history. Now that he heard of the same names, borne by descendants of the heroes of whom he had read, his fantasy painted, in glowing colours, bloody battles and exciting encounters, in which scions of great houses carried the standards of their forefathers to honour and glory. He, who had never before taken a newspaper in his hand, now became the most inveterate newspaper reader in the town, and he was always among the inquisitive ones who stood in the market-place and awaited the post with its exciting news.

Mathematics, drawing, politics, history—one might think that this was occupation enough for a man who was confined to a desk in a surveyor's office seven or eight hours a-day. And yet there was one interest that lay deeper than the ones named, and that gradually came to extinguish all the others, though only temporarily. This was music,—music which he himself believed was the sphere to which he was born. Here also his greater intellectual maturity exhibited itself in an unconquerable desire for systematic and theoretic insight.

The great musical light of France, and of the world at that time, was Jean Philippe Rameau. He obtained his first triumph in opera in the beginning of the thirties, and his celebrity drew attention to his theoretical works, which had before been known only to professionals and specialists. Rameau's name had also reached out-of-the-way Chambéry by that time, and as Rousseau by chance heard of his '*Traité de l'Harmonie réduite à ces Principes naturels*,' he did not rest until he had secured it. He happened to fall ill at the moment, and during his extended convalescence found excellent opportunity to absorb himself in the difficult work.

Rameau followed the usual tendency of the day, which had adopted Descartes' theory, and he applied the mathematical method to all arts and sciences; he made music absolutely dependent on mathematics, and was quite convinced that

he, in so doing, was consistent with natural laws. In this he was largely supported by his contemporaries. It was said that, after Rameau's method, it was a simple matter to play or compose, and that what had before taken years to learn one could now acquire in the course of a few months. But all of Rameau's works were miserably written, confused, obscure, and extremely difficult to understand. Rousseau brooded late and early over his 'Traité,' but could not unravel the tangles, and things did not improve when he made the acquaintance of another musician in Chambéry, Abbé Palais, who had had excellent training from an old Italian monk. Palais developed the principles of Italian music for him with great clearness, and that gave him two theories to deal with instead of one,—two theories which stood in mutual opposition to each other. By comparing these opposing opinions he struggled gradually to a clearer conception, and his ear soon began to ring with accompaniments, chords, and harmonies. This required an outlet, and so Rousseau collected all the musical talent in the little town, and arranged monthly concerts at the house of Mme. de Warens, where he himself with pride wielded the baton.

The surveyor's office in the light of comparison gradually lost every attraction; the disagreeableness of the confining and constant work depressed him more and more; to sit eight hours a-day at the most tiresome business, surrounded by people still more tiresome, shut in, in a hopeless, ill-smelling office,—this was not to be borne by a man who was absorbed in music, and dreamed of celebrity on the concert or operatic stage. He thought he had been extremely persevering this time anyhow—for almost two years he had sat there and written and calculated; there was bound to come an end to such things.

And so one day he went to Mme. de Warens and said that he intended relinquishing his position and devoting himself entirely to music. As might have been expected, Maman was not particularly delighted over this new sur-

prise; she thought it extremely rash of him to give up an excellent position, which brought in a certain income, in order to enter upon the doubtful and little respected profession of a musician. But all her arguments were of no use against his passionate stream of eloquence; he did not leave her until he had got her consent, and then he rushed off to the general director to resign; he felt as though he had performed the act of a hero; "I willingly gave up my situation without a reason, without an excuse, with the same, indeed with greater joy, than that with which I had undertaken it two years before."

Rousseau immediately established himself as music-teacher, and, at first, things went better than one could have expected. It is not certain that it did not rather overawe the good citizens of Chambéry to see a man give up a position of certainty in order to follow the precarious fortunes of his chosen profession. They thought that a man who could take such an unheard-of step must be inspired by genius. Besides there were no competitors in the little town, and, says Rousseau, "a one-eyed man is king among blind people"; and then, too, he was a young man of attractive appearance, and it was not long before he had so many pupils that his income quite equalled that of the secretaryship of the surveyor's office.

Jean Jacques was delighted with the change in his life. He mentions with great satisfaction all the beautiful ladies of the aristocracy who dressed themselves as attractively as they could so as to charm the handsome young music-teacher. There were brunettes and blondes, slender ones and plump ones, and Jean Jacques had an appreciative eye for every kind; he thought them all charming—in fact, he could not remember a single woman of Chambéry who was not beautiful.

Sometimes he condescended to the bourgeoisie also, and among the ladies of this class he makes special mention of a Mlle. Lard, a perfect model for a Grecian statue, "the most beautiful woman I have ever seen, if beauty can really

exist where there is neither life nor soul." Unfortunately she was indolent, cold, and so indifferent that it was equally impossible to please or displease her. However, her mother was all the more lively and enterprising; she never left the room when he was giving her daughter her lesson, and was so bold in her attentions that even Rousseau, who had never been indifferent to offers of female friendship, found it too much of a good thing.

He told Mme. de Warens the story of his experiences with his female pupils, and with Mme. Lard, and it affected her in an excessively peculiar manner, causing her to take a step still more surprising.

He describes this scene in the fifth book of 'Confessions': "Maman said that if she was to save me from the dangers of youth it was time to treat me like a man, and she did so, but in the most singular way." She went about looking more serious than usual, and preached even more morality; it was as though she were hiding something, and Jean Jacques began to speculate as to what could lie behind it all. One day he asked her, and that was just what she wished. She proposed that they should take a walk together the next day, so they started off early in the morning. They were together the whole day, and she occupied the time in preparing him for the favour which she intended bestowing upon him; she did not act as other women would have done, she was neither coquettish nor tempting, but she talked to him in reasonable and well-weighed words "which spoke more to my heart than to my senses." But Rousseau was restless, and did not listen particularly to what she said; at first he was too impatient for her to come to the point, and when he really did understand, he was too passionately occupied with her herself to be able to listen to her words. She continued her singular course in love-making by putting conditions which he did not even understand, and ended by giving him eight days for reflection, against which he was gallant enough to protest, but for which in his heart he was grate-

ful, strange as it may seem. He tells in full detail how he felt during the time of waiting; his sentiments were by no means those of joyful anticipation, they were mingled with so many other feelings that darkened his prospective happiness,—anxiety and fear of the unknown, natural repulsion toward resigning himself to a woman whom he had hitherto looked upon with the feelings of a son, the painful knowledge that he shared her favour with another. Besides he knew her *tempérament de glace*; he was fully aware that her sacrifice was purely pedagogical, and had nothing to do with love. The eight days therefore did not seem at all like centuries; on the contrary, they went much too quickly.

The whole of this story, which Rousseau with ungallant indiscretion relates in every detail, seems most unnatural and most improbable, and there are several biographers who do not believe a word of the whole thing, but look upon it as a conscious fabrication of Rousseau's later days. But we must remember that Jean Jacques, in the matter of love-affairs, was an abnormal person, absolutely lacking in masculine initiative, and who therefore always took a passive part in the various experiences of this kind that filled his life. And such women as Mme. de Warens, who unite great goodness of heart with complete lack of passion, and who on account of this very coldness are able to reason themselves into erotic cynicism,—such women have certainly been heard of before.

When Maman had made her young friend her lover, she wanted to make him a gallant also—she did everything in her power to improve his manners, which still left much to be desired; but the results were distressing, whether it be that she lacked pedagogical talent or that he was too un-receptive. He was sent to a dancing-school, but never even advanced so far as to be able to walk through a minuet; and still less successful were his lessons in fencing, as he never learned to manage even the simplest thrusts.

In spite of this, Rousseau lived in unalloyed happiness

with his motherly mistress; he did not seem to have been at all embarrassed at having Claude Anet for a partner, and, if we can believe 'Confessions,' Anet also took things quietly. There can be no doubt that he was aware of Rousseau's promotion; but he knew Mme. de Warens' theories in regard to love, and could not protest against her living in accordance with them. If he felt any pain over the faithlessness of his mistress, he never showed what he felt, and so there developed a triangular situation "which perhaps has never seen its counterpart on this earth." The three were one in heart and thought. They were so much a part of each other that "if one of us was absent from a meal, or if a fourth person were present, all became confusion, et malgré nos liaisons particulières, les tête-à-tête nous étaient moins doux que la réunion."

However, this beautiful tripartite idyl did not last long; on one of his botanical expeditions in the Alps, Anet caught a cold that resulted in lung trouble which caused his death.¹ He died on the 13th of March 1734, and Rousseau was bowed down with sorrow over the loss of the "truest friend he ever had"—although this did not prevent his being rather pleased at inheriting Claude's knick-knacks.

At Anet's death, Rousseau became the only cock of the walk; he was promoted to adviser and steward for Mme. de Warens—certainly a poor exchange. Anet had been a thoughtful and careful steward, and, by the authority he exercised through his quiet strength, he was an extremely

¹ Mugnier (*op. cit.*, 119 f.) declares this to be pure invention on Rousseau's part. "One does not seek aromatic plants on the Alps in the month of March; one would find nothing but snow." This may be true, but it does not seem impossible to me that Anet may have been in the Alps during the summer or autumn, and caught a cold which developed into a fatal illness in the course of the following winter. Mugnier states positively that it was Mme. de Warens' faithlessness that killed Anet, and I cannot deny that what Rousseau told of his attempt at suicide is rather inconsistent with the calmness with which he, according to Rousseau, took his rival's advancement, but the safest plan is to say that we really cannot be sure about it, though it is not unreasonable to think that he may have died in March of pleurisy, which originated in a cold caught in July or August.

necessary counterbalance to the lady of the house and her extensive schemes. Jean Jacques enjoyed the same confidence and intimacy as his predecessor, but lacked his authority. He was clear-sighted enough to see that her affairs were going down; he did not lack a certain bourgeois sense of order, and he warned her many times against her rash economical methods, which recognised no distinction between income and outlay; but she would not listen to him, nor take him seriously, she only joked and petted him when he began to scold.

It was quite natural that she should have little confidence in his economical wisdom, for when he wanted something for himself he did not scruple to involve her in further expenses. For instance, in the summer of 1735 he decided that it was necessary for him to go to Besançon to study music—a trip that cost poor Maman 800 francs, and she was already deeply in debt. It was one of the world's celebrities, Abbé Blanchard, with whom he intended studying, and he expected to return to his beloved mistress laden with honour and gold. Blanchard received him very cordially, read his attempts at composition, praised them very much, and gave him an opportunity of appearing in a concert, and he had a great success. But that was the end. Blanchard had just received a very flattering offer of the position as leader of the royal orchestra in Paris, and he was willing to take Jean Jacques with him and secure a place for him in the orchestra. Rousseau was on the point of starting; but, sitting alone in his hotel, he was seized by scruples. It was not such a simple step he was about to take, as he had still two years' study before him. Blanchard said that he could not be admitted until he had finished, and what was he to live on in the meantime? On second thoughts, he decided that it was best for him to return to Chambéry and continue his music-teaching, and so he did.

Among his pupils there was a young man whose acquaintance was to be of great significance to Rousseau. This was de Conzié, a Savoyard nobleman, who went to

Rousseau more for the purpose of learning to know him personally than of benefiting by his teaching. He was an agreeable, cultured, well-informed man, and he and Rousseau were soon the best of friends. "The germs of literature and philosophy which began to develop in me, and which required only a little nursing and competition, got necessary nourishment from him." He had very little interest in music, so the two young friends used their hour for everything except singing. They ate breakfast together, talked together, and read literary news together—but not a word of music. They were especially interested in Voltaire's correspondence with the Prussian Crown Prince, which was creating such a sensation at the time. They were enthusiastic admirers of the two celebrated letter-writers, and everything that concerned them was sure to arouse their strongest interest; they devoured whatever they could find of Voltaire's. From the correspondence they passed on to his philosophical letters, and Rousseau became a blind worshipper of the great scoffer, who later was to become one of his bitterest enemies. "The taste which I formed for this kind of reading filled me with a desire to write with elegance, and I tried to imitate the beautiful word-painting of this author with whom I was so charmed." His love of study grew under his inspiring association with de Conzié, and was never extinguished, although it was still not characterised by the irresistible intensity which was to come later.

Mme. de Warens' house was no place for quiet study; there was the eternal disturbance of people coming and going, doubtful characters, adventurers, and schemers, who tried, much too successfully, to turn her generosity to good account. Rousseau often felt homeless in this whirl, and used whatever opportunity he could find to escape, by going away for a longer or shorter period,—he had not yet lost his love of vagabondage.

He lived in this way for several years, his time occupied with musical or literary interests and travelling. He has

still no plans for the future. In a letter to his father (of uncertain date, but, at any rate, during this time, 1735-37), he declares that he agrees with him that it is high time he should find some sure way of making his living, but he says this is not such an easy matter. He mentions the difficult courses open to him, and having referred, in tacit reproach, to his wasted youth, which passed without his having received an education in any definite branch, he points out three possibilities: he can be a musician, or a secretary for some distinguished man, or a governor (tutor in a private family). He is now trying, to the best of his ability, to prepare himself for one of the last-named positions, and, in the meantime, he can earn a temporary subsistence by music-teaching, in which he considers himself to be fairly proficient. This sounds almost like a systematic plan.

In the meantime he had a misfortune which he thought was to put an abrupt end to all of his plans. During the summer of 1737 he was for some time keenly interested in chemistry, and occasionally undertook small experiments. One day he was trying to make "sympathetic ink" when the bottle exploded like a bomb and hit him in the face. "I swallowed a quantity of poison; I was at the point of death. I was blind for almost six weeks," he writes in 'Confessions,' and the proof that he really believed that his last hour was come is evidenced by the fact that he formally and legally made a will.

This document is preserved, and is of interest chiefly because it shows how seriously Rousseau even at this time looked upon his Catholic religion. He prepares himself for death in obedience to all the forms of the Church; he crosses himself in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, recommends his soul to God his Creator, beseeches him by the suffering of Christ and through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin and his patron saints John and James to show him mercy and receive his soul into Paradise; he declares himself willing to live and die in the faith of the



MADAME DE WARENS.

From Portrait by Largillière.

Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church, and intrusts his burial to his heir (Mme. de Warens), enjoining her to provide for prayers to God for the peace of his soul, and he leaves small sums to the different cloisters of the town so that masses may be read for him, otherwise the chief provision of the will instituted Mme. de Warens as sole heir.

In the meantime the injury was not as great as Jean Jacques had imagined; it was even an exaggeration to say he was blind for six weeks, for already a month afterwards we find him in Geneva in negotiations with his father to get his maternal inheritance paid to him: he had written to him before, but had never succeeded in getting an answer. Now the matter was adjusted, he was paid his 4500 gulden and hastened back to Chambéry with his money intact, with the exception of his personal expenses and those connected with the matter. "I hurried home to lay the rest at Maman's feet. My heart beat with joy on the way, and I rejoiced a thousand times more when I put this money into her hand than when I received it myself. She accepted it as a matter of course, which is natural for such noble characters, who themselves do these things easily and look upon them without admiration, and it was also a matter of course that almost all the money was used on me."

This all sounds very beautiful, but if we add together the sums which Mme. de Warens paid out for him both then and later, it certainly was not Rousseau who was on the credit side.

It was in August 1737 that Rousseau came back from Geneva with his little inheritance, and in all probability he even then found conditions in Maman's house changed; a new man had come into the house and he had taken or was about to take possession of Jean Jacques' place. It is true that in 'Confessions' he makes this new and fateful relation take place at a somewhat later period of time; but a letter which he wrote from Grenoble some time afterwards indicates that he did not remember rightly. In fact 'Confessions' is marred by hopeless chronological confusion in the chapters relating to these years.

It is certain that he was only a short time at Chambéry before starting once more on a journey. He was not well; he had not received any permanent injury from the explosion, but he was nervous and anæmic and without energy. Perhaps Maman's coolness had had some effect. He went about as pale as a corpse and as thin as a skeleton; his pulse beat in his veins and his heart was irregular; he was always depressed, slack, and miserable, and moved about with difficulty; if he walked a little fast, he became almost suffocated; if he leaned over, he had an attack of dizziness; he could not lift the lightest object, and he was reduced to a painful inactivity at a time when his impatient soul was yearning to make use of all of its powers. In addition to this, he was troubled by what our ancestors called the vapours; he burst into tears without the least excuse; he started in terror at the sound of a bird flying past, or a leaf falling to the ground; he was abnormally sensitive, capricious, and fickle in his humour. Things became still worse, when he began to study physiology and anatomy, for he saw before his mind's eye all the organs of his body and was sure that there was not a single one of them in order,—he never read a description of a disease without feeling convinced that that was his case. At last he fastened on the belief that what ailed him was a polypus in the heart, and as he had heard of a doctor in Montpellier who was known to have cured such a case, off he went to Montpellier.

He started in the beginning of September. On the trip he had an experience, an amorous adventure, a genuine one, the first and last real one in his whole life. He dwells with delight and great frankness on the details of his blessedness, and Mme. de Larnage was and continued to be a never-to-be-forgotten sunbeam in his life. He forgot all about the polypus in his heart. However, this was only an "amour de voyage"; at Saint-Esprit they said farewell to each other, and Rousseau promised to visit her on his return trip. But he did not keep his promise; he went past her house, very proud of his self-control. He acknowledges

that he did not do so without a sigh of regret, but in requital he had the satisfaction of being able to say to himself for the first time in his life, "I deserve my self-respect, I am capable of placing duty before pleasure."

In the meantime he remained a long time in Montpellier, much longer than he wished; for he detested the town and the people, and he did not believe in the doctor. We have three of his letters to Mme. de Warens written from there. We see from them that their relations had begun to cool a little on her side; he writes time and again, asking for money, but gets no reply, and when he finally does get an answer, it is not what he wished but is full of upbraidings and reproaches. He tries to write coolly and in a business-like way, but he cannot always manage it and sometimes suddenly loses control. In a letter, where he addresses her as madame, there is a postscript of quite another tone: "Ah! dearest Maman, I would rather be with you, even though I should have to perform the hardest labour on earth, than own the greatest fortune in another place; I cannot live away from you, it is quite useless to think of it; I told you so long ago, and I feel it even more passionately now. If I can obtain this boon, everything else will be a matter of indifference to me. . . . For the love of God, you must arrange it so that I do not die of despair. I agree to everything. I subject myself to anything, except the one point on which I am incapable of submitting. Ah, dear Maman! Are you no longer my dear Maman? Have I lived a little too long?" At last he was on the way home, he hurried on, using the diligence much more than he had intended, and arrived a half-day before the time he had named. He waited at the nearest station until the hour he was expected, so as to make sure of the warm reception he hoped for, but he was greatly disappointed.

"I arrived to the minute. When still far away from the house, I began to gaze down the road to see if I could catch sight of her; my heart beat more and more as I approached. I arrive quite out of breath. . . . I see no one in the court,

no one at the gate, no one in the window. I begin to feel anxious. I am alarmed lest something may have happened. I go in and find the house quiet: the workmen sat eating in the kitchen, otherwise there was no table laid. The maid seemed surprised to see me, she did not know that I was expected. I go upstairs and see her at last,—the dear Maman whom I loved so tenderly, so passionately, so purely. I fly to her and throw myself at her feet. ‘Ah, are you there, my boy?’ she says, and kisses me, ‘have you had a pleasant journey? How are you?’ This reception confused me. I asked her if she had not got my letter. Yes, she had. I thought that perhaps you had not received it, I said. A young man was with her. I knew him slightly, as I had met him at the house before I left; but now he seemed to be quite at home there, and so he was. In short, I found my place usurped.”

The description he gives of his fortunate rival is flattering neither to him nor to Mme. de Warens’ taste. “His name was Wintzenried, he was from the Pays de Vaud, he was apprentice to a wigmaker, and travelled around the country in this capacity. He had come and presented himself to Mme. de Warens, and she had received him cordially, as she did all strangers, especially those from her own district. He was tall, blond, insipid, a vapid face, a vapid mind, he talked like the beautiful Leander, and used all the mannerisms and expressions of his class when he narrated his long stories about his exploits; he mentioned not more than half of the marquises whom he had in his power; he stated that he had never dressed the hair of a beautiful lady without having bewigged the husband at the same time: vain, stupid, ignorant, and impertinent,—such was the substitute given me in my absence and the associate offered me on my return. . . .

“The newcomer had proved himself eager, industrious, and accurate in the execution of Maman’s small commissions, of which there were always more than enough. He had made himself overseer of her workmen, and, just as noisy as I was

quiet, he made himself heard and seen everywhere,—at the plough, in the hayfield, in the woods, in the stable, in the barnyard. He neglected nothing except the garden, which work was much too peaceful for him and afforded no opportunity of creating a racket. His greatest pleasures were to drive a loaded wagon, to saw and split wood; he was to be seen everywhere with a hoe or a spade in his hand; he did the work of I do not know how many men, but at any rate he made enough noise for ten or twelve. All this uproar made a great impression on poor Maman; she thought she had found a treasure in this man; and as she was anxious to bind him to her, she used all means that she found suitable, not excepting the one she considered the surest."

After this time the relation between Mme. de Warens and Jean Jacques was never the same as of old; it is true that he did what he could to force his rebellious heart into friendliness toward his new brother; but from that time, judging from everything, Rousseau was more of a burden than a delight to her. And yet he counts the ensuing years as the happiest in his life,—it is these that he gilds with his most beautiful language. It was at this time that Mme. de Warens took her two "sons" and moved from the hideous house in Chambéry to "Les Charmettes," where she had rented a little house and a piece of ground. For Rousseau it was like a home-coming.

"Here begins the short happiness of my life; here I passed the peaceful but too fleeting moments which give me the right to say that I have lived. Oh precious moments! for which I am always longing, begin anew your dear course; if it is possible run more slowly in my memory than you did in reality. What shall I do to lengthen the pathetic and simple narration to gratify my own pleasure? How can I say over and over again the same things without wearying my readers, and how can I make them understand that it does not weary me to repeat them unendingly? If it were acts or words that I refer to, I could describe them and reproduce them in some way or other, but how can I express

that which was not said nor done nor even thought but only felt,—when I cannot point out any cause for my happiness other than this very feeling itself? I arose with the sun and I was happy; I went out to walk and I was happy; I wandered through the woods, over the hills, I strolled in the valleys, I read, I lounged, I worked in the garden, I plucked the fruit, I helped with the housekeeping, and happiness followed me everywhere; my happiness did not consist in any one definite thing, it dwelt within me entirely and completely; it could not leave me a single moment.”

XI.

"LES CHARMETTES."

"LES CHARMETTES," the tiny house on the outskirts of Chambéry, where Rousseau spent the last year of his union with Mme. de Warens, has become one of the world's literary Meccas. During the hundred and fifty years that have passed since he became a celebrity, an endless procession of men and women, animated by variously blended emotions, has streamed to those homely rooms and wandered about among those lovely scenes, to taste for themselves of that Paradise that Rousseau describes with such alluring power in the sixth book of his 'Confessions.' Not only friends and admirers, but foes, too, have been drawn to this spot; when George Sand visited "Les Charmettes" in 1861, there lay on the drawing-room table a visitors' book, in which travellers had written their names and sentiments: it was full of coarse insults and foolish upbraidings.

"After I had written a few lines on the last page," she wrote in the 'Revue des Deux Mondes' (XLVIII. 247), "I looked through the book with rising disgust. . . . I struck out what I had written, so that my homage should not be polluted by contact with these scribblings. I should have erased my name also; it is not on such foul sheets as these that one's name should be inscribed in Rousseau's house."

In all probability both George Sand and the insolent scribblers visited "Les Charmettes" with false, or at least erroneous, expectations; we must remember that they were indebted exclusively to Rousseau's 'Confessions' for the

inspiration of the mood that prompted their pilgrimage. The 'Confessions' say that it was during the summer of 1736 that Madame moved to the country, but from her lease we see that he was mistaken; it was really two years later, St John's Day, 1738. This date renders impossible the picture that Rousseau gives of his life at "Les Charmettes," for, as we know from letters dated 1737, there was at this time a serious cloud hanging over the friendship of "Maman" and "Petit." On the occasion of his return from Montpellier in February (or March) 1738, he found, to his bitter disappointment, that Wintzenried was securely installed in his place in Mme. de Warens' affections, but it was at Chambéry, not at "Les Charmettes," that he had this painful experience.

When they settled in this rustic "Paradise" a little later in the same year, it was undoubtedly in close company with the serpent, and the pure idyl that Rousseau's memory indulges in is accordingly inconceivable. It is not easy to discover the purpose in this inaccuracy. However, one may be permitted the assumption that all the pleasant memories of his youthful days became in retrospect associated with "Les Charmettes," which, for many reasons, had become so luminous in his mind's eye; but certainly it is more probable that, with conscious deliberation, he united in artistic composition the two elements that, according to his interpretation of life, seemed to belong together,—country life and idyllic love.

Even if one, after closer inspection, is obliged to revise certain details of Rousseau's account, nevertheless the final conclusion one comes to is that the time spent at 'Les Charmettes' was of great significance for his development, perhaps, indeed, the most important year of his entire life; for it was here that he lived through a decisive intellectual crisis, it was here that he prepared himself for his life's work.

If we cast a glance backwards over all the shifting circumstances of his life up to the point which we have now reached—from that day when the gates of Geneva closed

upon him and he stood, fifteen years old, alone in the world, without support, without prospects; his meeting with Pont-verre; his willingness to change his faith; the faring forth to Annécý and his reception by Mme. de Warens; his cruel sufferings in the cloister of Turin, the lackey period in the houses of Madame de Vercellis and Count Gouvion; the vagabond days with the good-for-nothing Bâcle; all the serious failures—as quill-driver, as priest’s apprentice, as student of music, as surveyor; all the adventures, especially those he experienced in the bad company he always felt irresistibly drawn towards; and if we, at the same time, take into consideration the moral qualities with which he was equipped, the sentimental training given by his father, the unformed, neglected will, the inborn violence of his desires, the fierce heat of his blood, his abnormal sexual nature, his disregard for truth and for other people’s property, his thoughtless levity, his innate *penchant à dégénérer*,—if we think of all this and remember the facile vacillation with which he put himself at the mercy of chance, we wonder that he did not meet the same fate as his brother,—that he did not end on the gallows or in the depths with the dregs and lees of society.

What saved him from going to the bottom was his pride, his ambition, and his fantasy. He was never in doubt a moment as to the great fate that awaited him; it never occurred to him that he could possibly be an ordinary person; when he was lackey in distinguished houses he never mixed with the other servants; he looked upon the master and mistress as his natural equals; and if they had not the wit to see what kind of spirit dwelt within him, he only wondered over their stupidity or complained to himself of their heartlessness.

Even when he was in the depths of misery, he never allowed himself to sink into despair; he was always sure that it was only a period of waiting, that it would not be long before he should be discovered. And while he waited his fancy kept him unharmed; what life denied him imagin-

ation gave him in full measure, and when reality uncharitably extinguished his dream in one direction, a new one blazed up instantaneously in another. Thus throve his vital energy in his youth and made him unconquerable; his pride, always supported by his fancy, took the place of the will-power he lacked, and whether he was capable or desirous of governing himself or not, nevertheless in a certain way he governed life itself, because it never succeeded in forcing him down below that level to which his thoughts of greatness convulsively clung.

At the bottom of his ambitious arrogance there lay, of course, a reality, a great intellectual gift; otherwise he must necessarily have ended at best as a fantastic dreamer, a good-for-nothing. But a long time passed before he became aware—not of his gifts—but of the content of his gifts.

When one begins a superficial reading of 'Confessions,' one is likely to conclude prematurely that his ambition is without purpose, that he simply expects the great prize to fall into his hands without the least effort on his part. But a more careful reading shows that—whether or not it was fully known to him—there were present throughout his entire life, as it were, two magnetic poles that attracted him. Their influence was absent from many hours of his life, and he sometimes hardly felt their attraction, but he came little by little nearer to them, until one day he fell completely into their power. These two magnetic poles were—books and music.

His starting-point in both domains was as unfavourable as possible. Geneva was the world's most unmusical spot, or at least in regard to music, was the world's "deserted village." As Brunetière expresses it, Calvin suffered from "Art-Terror," and he viewed music with the same disgust with which he looked upon every effort of art to seek sensual expression for religious feeling. The beautiful Catholic church music, with its many-voiced choir and its manifold musical effects, was an abomination to him, and when, forced by the Bible's commands, he allowed psalm-singing, his permission

was given with the express reservation that melody should not be conspicuous, but that it should preferably take the form of rhythmical speech, where the harmony in no way could distract attention from the meaning of the words.

Calvin's view influenced Genevan opinion for centuries; even in Rousseau's childhood church-music was in the same primitive stage as during the great Reformer's life, and there was practically no lay-music at all, although towards the end of the seventeenth century it was proclaimed that music-teachers might be allowed to settle in the republic, “out of consideration for the foreign element”; but when, every now and then, the natives attempted to take advantage of this permission, a violent outcry at such godlessness arose from the ranks of the rigorists.

Rousseau's early childhood passed cut off from any sort of musical *milieu*; he enjoyed not a single musical advantage,—no concerts, no opera; at church a miserable psalm-singing choir; on national holidays only the roll of the drum and the metallic clang of brass instruments,—that was all. But Rousseau was a born musician, at least so he himself says, and Albert Jansen, the biographer, who more thoroughly than any other has investigated Rousseau's relation to music, corroborates this judgment. “Certain of Rousseau's compositions,” writes Jansen in ‘Rousseau as Musician,’ “charmed mankind for many decades; all his theoretical works on the subject were epoch-making, and even to-day contain an abundance of useful information; he was in truth a born musician. But at the decisive moment his philosophical genius threw obstacles in the way of the full and free development of his talent. . . .”

When one thinks of the paucity of musical opportunities he was forced to suffer during his entire youth, one is touched by the eagerness with which he collected the crumbs that came in his way.

As far back as he could remember he had felt this alluring attraction. He mentions with pride that his deceased mother had sung to her own accompaniment on

the theorbo; he was never tired of listening to Aunt Suson's ballads, and they so impressed themselves on his memory that, twenty years later, he was able to inscribe them in the manuscript he used when teaching music in Chambéry. When he lived in Lambercier's house there was no question of music in any form, he says, but as apprentice for Ducommon, melodies and bits of ballad-verse buzzed about him, his ear drank in everything, so that he soon out-distanced all his comrades, and on the road from Confignon to Annécý he trolled and sang to his heart's content beneath the windows of every chateau, in the vain hope of enticing the beautiful princesses from their bowers. When he reached Turin a little later, his first steps led him to the spot where he could hear the splendid military music, and when he escaped from the hospice and heard of the royal chapel concerts at the castle, he never missed an opportunity, but attended them every single day, to feast upon the rich harmonies of this world-renowned orchestra and upon the heavenly music of the lovely anthems.

Up to this time he had never received any instruction in music; this came when he returned from Turin to Annécý, where Mme. de Warens herself, who kept up her music to a certain extent, gave him about eight or ten lessons in piano-playing. With this slight preparation, and a very insufficient knowledge of music-reading, he repaired to the priest's academy, and there undertook laboriously to spell his way through two long cantatas. He persevered until he had mastered them, and the very day he left the academy hastened home, and to the great surprise of his teacher, sang them without a single fault.

In music he became a self-taught man, for the few months' study under Le Maître at a later date amounted to very little; by his own unaided persistence he developed into a fairly successful music-teacher; alone he struggled through Rameau's difficult theoretical works; alone he mastered the secrets of composition; alone he originated new methods, and without guidance from others he undertook original

work which, although it did not mark him as a learned musician, nevertheless gave him the right to boast of an unusual versatility and appreciation of the universal laws of musical coherence and harmony.

Throughout all the circumstances of his youth, although it is difficult to discover any definite purpose or conscious tendency, his love of music runs like a red thread, a constant value that he never relinquishes, and one that throughout his maturity he coins into mintage that steadily increases in worth.

Side by side with his music, after a time even stronger than it, and finally extinguishing it, runs the course of his inclination towards literature, poetry, and philosophy.

Here, too, his talents forced themselves to the front in spite of unfavourable conditions, and without help or guidance from any quarter. The history of his education is as irregular and as far from normal as it could conceivably be.

Fate deprived him of all proper school training; there were only small beginnings that never were completed,—the two years with Lambercier from his tenth to his twelfth year constituted the longest uninterrupted period of study. Otherwise it was a question of no more than a few months at a time that he profited by systematic discipline—as catechumen in Turin, at Abbé Gouvon’s house, in the priests’ academy in Annécy. He on no occasion distinguished himself as a pupil; on the contrary, time after time he was reported for stupidity and a deplorable unwillingness to study. This lack of docility was due not only to the eternal interruptions in his sporadic training, with its failure to provide any sort of coherent system, but also to certain peculiarities of his own nature, which I have previously mentioned. But in spite of his antipathy to study under another’s guidance, and the infinitesimal profit he derived from such study, his love of reading and thinking for himself never left him, though it expressed itself more or less irregularly. The conditions were about the same as with his music; in both cases an inborn talent instinctively forced

its right-of-way, and proved him to be by birth not only a musician, but a poet and a thinker as well.

However, it was a long time before he was aware of his own gifts, and during this period his thirst for intellectuality became quenched quite haphazardly, without choice, by any material that came his way. This haphazard experience was often unfavourable, so that his head became filled with all sorts of nonsense of which he could never quite rid himself; but sometimes he was fortunate, and there flamed up torchlights here and there that cast illumination over a fragment of wayside and gave him a glimpse of the road ahead of him. Abbé Gouvon taught him to read with discriminating afterthought instead of devouring books, and by his own efforts he acquired a deeper understanding, not only of content, but of form and artistic polish; Gaime directed his observation to life and his fellow-creatures, as well as to prevalent and intrinsic moral values. Mme. de Warens' house in Chambéry, which too often was full of adventurers and impostors, with their insignificant clamour, was also open to certain cultivated men with more elevated ambitions,—Simon, judge of the Higher Court, who, behind a caricature-like exterior, possessed a wide-awake intelligence and kept up with all the movements and thought of the day; Dr Salamon, who talked with his patient oftener about scientific questions than of his complaints; the young de Conzié and others.

Throughout all of those influences from people and books, throughout the natural maturing that came with the years; throughout all his motley life-experience, his adventures and their adaptation and incorporation into his memories, little by little he was approaching that crucial moment when his brilliant intelligence opened wide its eyes and demanded clearness, unity, coherence, vision,—the vision that perceives the universal laws governing life and nature. This important awakening took place at about the moment to which we have followed him,—the revelation was consummated at "Les Charmettes."

Outer circumstances hastened it. He became ill and was forced to give up his music-teaching, and so had the entire day at his disposal. Wintzenried's reception and establishment in the house made "Petit" more and more superfluous, and "Maman's" increasing indifference drove him to intense intellectual occupation, in which his disappointment sought forgetfulness; it was at this time (28th of July 1737) that he came of age (twenty-five), and the necessity of seeking a vocation became importunate; music was an uncertain means of livelihood, and besides not sufficiently esteemed to satisfy his ambition; he knew that he could make a name for himself if he could secure a position as secretary or private tutor in a great house. But for such a position he knew also that knowledge and information were essential.

All these circumstances, together with the ripening of his intellectual powers, contributed to cause him to devote himself to his studies.

In Rousseau's psychological make-up there was a peculiar combination of sluggishness and passion. "Difficult to set in motion, difficult to hold back when once started, that has always been my nature," he writes in the first book of 'Confessions.' He possessed no healthy sense of proportion; he oscillated always between two extremes. No one could vegetate better without feeling the lack of occupation or idle away his time in laziness with an easier conscience; but when he once had entered upon an undertaking he pursued it with positive frenzy. I have mentioned how he almost worked himself to illness in trying to learn drawing, for which he had not the least talent; and thus it was with all things, large and small. At one time he conceived the ambition of becoming the world's greatest chess-player—so as to be pre-eminent in something,—and with this object in view, puzzled and worked night and day with chess-board and books, set himself difficult tasks, showed himself to no one, until one day he appeared, pale as a corpse, his nerves overstrained and half-ruined from night vigils and lack of exercise.

In the light of these facts we cannot wonder that his intellectual awakening assailed him as a crisis, as an access of frenzied industry. The fact that during his sickness he imagined that he was going to die only gave his eagerness more feverish impetus; it was an unbearable thought that he might depart this life without learning something about it, without having caught a single glimpse of the laws of coherence in the world that encompassed him. What he acquired in these three or four years is almost unbelievable,—with a poor memory, without teacher or guidance, without knowledge of any other method than the one he adopted in order to carve his way through refractory material to the splendour that lay beyond. And when we read the books that Jean Jacques Rousseau gave to the world, we see how deeply and to what extent he did penetrate these mysteries; we see what a rich harvest his philosophical thoughts did glean from his studies, and, in truth, we are impressed and forget to assume that smile one so often holds in readiness for the “self-made man.” We say to ourselves how immeasurably deeper, truer, and more estimable is that scholarship attained in the solitude of an intelligent man’s struggle to satisfy his intellectual yearnings, of how much greater worth it is than the learning, didactic and arbitrary, which a normal pupil obtains by means of scholastic instruction.

It is of extreme interest to follow him in his work as he describes it in ‘Confessions.’ I see no reason for doubting the accuracy of his account. One does remember such things, and however suspicious one may be of Rousseau’s autobiographical details, it is inexplicable that he should have diverged from the truth on this point.

He complains that he wasted much time because he did not understand how to go about his tasks. When he undertook a work, at first he thought that in order to profit by his reading he must possess all the information that the book took for granted. He did not know at that time, he says, that often the author himself does not possess this knowledge, but secures it from other books as he needs it. He worked

for a time under this misapprehension, interrupted at every moment, because he was constantly turning from one book to another, and it sometimes happened to him that before he had reached the tenth page of the work he was studying he would find that he had collected a small library in order to look up references.

“Fortunately, I discovered (after having wasted much time) that I was on the wrong road, one that would lead me astray into an endless labyrinth, but I left it before I was quite lost.”

However, he had learned something from this method. He had seen that the various sciences are not independent of each other, that they give each other mutual support and are indispensable the one to the other. But he now began to study one subject at a time, constantly exchanging them.

This is quite in keeping with certain of Rousseau’s peculiarities. “I certainly was not born for study,” he says, “for persevering industry tires me so that it is impossible for me to occupy myself for as much as a half-hour at a time with the same subject, especially when I try to follow other men’s thoughts—it has happened at times that I have been able to devote a longer period to my own. When I have read a few pages of an author who requires close attention my mind wanders and I become lost in day-dreams. But when several subjects follow one another, however uninterruptedly, the one is a rest from the other, and in that way I can pursue them without pause and much more easily. I took advantage of this observation and arranged my plan of study accordingly. I exchanged the different subjects with such variety that I worked the entire day without being tired.”

He became more and more ingenious in dividing his time, and, though very unlike him, he soon began to work by schedule.

“I got up every morning before sunrise. The scene of my morning walk was a beautiful road, reached by crossing a

neighbouring garden. It stretched over a grape orchard and thence along the edge of the hill to Chambéry. While I walked I repeated my morning prayer, which did not consist in a meaningless mumbling, but was the expression of a sincere heart's gratitude to the Creator of the lovely scenes on whose beauties my eyes were feasting." After breakfast with Maman they sat together a while and talked, but he soon went to his books. I usually began with philosophy—'Port Royal Logic,' Locke's 'Essays,' Malebranche, Leibnitz, Descartes, and others.

"I soon discovered that all of these writers were in a constant state of mutual inconsistency, and I undertook the chimerical plan of reconciling them, a work that exhausted me and wasted much time for me. I became quite confused and did not advance a step. At last I discarded this method and adopted one that was much better, and which, to my mind, was instrumental in the real progress I made in spite of lack of capabilities, for it is quite certain that I had very little talent for study. When I read an author I made a rule that I would adopt all of his ideas without applying my own to his reasoning and without disputing his statements in my own mind.

"I said to myself, let me begin by obtaining a store of thoughts, either false or true, but at least clear, and before beginning to choose and compare let me wait until I have acquired sufficient information. While this method has some drawbacks, it proved extremely useful to me in gaining knowledge. After a few years of accepting other men's thoughts, almost without personal reflection and reasoning, I found myself in possession of a foundation sufficiently firm to allow me to think without the help of others. When I travelled it was impossible to resort to books. I entertained myself by recalling and comparing what I had read, by weighing these ideas in the scales of common-sense, and sometimes by pronouncing judgment on my teachers. Although it was late to begin the exercise of the faculty of criticism, I did not find that it had lost strength, and when

I published my own thoughts no one accused me of being a servile disciple that swore by ‘*verba magistri.*’”

From philosophy he passed on to mathematics, which had already occupied him somewhat when he was surveyor; now he went more methodically to work and became eagerly absorbed in Père Lami’s text-book on geometry and algebra, which appealed to him more than Euclid; from this point he progressed to Reynaud’s more difficult work. He never became a mathematician, but he acquired the ground principles necessary to an understanding of the philosophical speculation of the day, and, at the same time, sharpened his wits by means of the exertion spent in pursuing the exact methods that a study of this science demands.

The study of Latin occupied the rest of the morning; he complains, both at this period and even before, of the endless drudgery of the Latin grammar’s rules and exceptions; he pursues various methods, but his memory is not capable of retaining what he learns; he learns by rote over and over again the same words, determined to force memory by the power of his will. But it was all useless; at last he had to change his methods.

“I understood construction well enough to read an easy author with the help of the lexicon. I tried this plan and was fairly satisfied with it. I limited myself to oral translation, but worked industriously at it. With perseverance I finally came to read fluently, but never managed a talking or writing knowledge of Latin.”

Nor had he the least use for such knowledge, but his familiarity with Latin literature became of great significance in his education and authorship.

At midday he closed his books, and if the meal was not ready, put in the waiting time by working in the garden or watching the bees or the doves.

After dinner he returned to his studies—“but my afternoon’s occupation deserves the name rather of recreation and amusement than study.” He read whatever occurred

to him, without plan, chiefly interested however in geography and history. At one time he was absorbed in chronology, and thence there was an easy road to astronomy. He did not accomplish much in this branch of science; he lacked instruments, and was forced to content himself with book-knowledge and the few simple experiments he could perform with the telescope and the planisphere that he had secured. On starlit nights he often repaired to a hill in the neighbourhood, made his observations, and with the help of his planisphere compared and took note of the stars and constellations that he perceived in the heavens.

When the peasants caught sight of him occupied at midnight with his arts of sorcery, thinking the devil was loose they made a swift retreat, and soon ugly rumours were abroad as to what took place at "Les Charmettes."

He was occupied thus practically every day; but this account of his studies is far from complete. In a poem written in 1738 ("Le verger des Charmettes") he names a number of authors whom he does not mention in 'Confessions,' and of whom we find traces in his works. A little later, when we examine in detail the sources and influences seen in his work, we shall take occasion to look nearer into the literary baggage he took with him from Savoy. The important point now is only to confirm in a general way the time and nature of the intellectual crisis he underwent before going to Paris.

Although I have followed as accurately as possible every little intellectual influence, every expression of his mental curiosity during his entire youth, and although we have seen how the demands of his intelligence were constantly increasing, nevertheless from 1737 or 1738 he appears to us as a quite new creature, in whom it is difficult to recognise the thoughtless vagabond of previous years. He has at last matured; he begins to make conscious efforts to adopt an independent and collected view of life, he not only equips himself with energy and system for the task that lay nearest—so as to be a successful teacher,—but arms

himself simultaneously for the struggle of which he himself has only a dim perception.

Not only his intellectual but his religious and moral life underwent a noticeable development at “Les Charmettes,” although the crisis here was neither so complete nor so decisive. That his thoughts were always fixed on death contributed to a deeply religious earnestness, and to support this gloomy view he resorted constantly to the Jansenists, Oratorians, and the Port Royal writers, who always, whatever subject they handled, were imbued with the sense of God’s glory and the wretchedness of mankind. Rousseau says that their uncharitable theology often appalled him and that the fear of Hell pursued him everywhere. He sought consolation in talks with Mme. de Warens and her confessor, both of whom quieted his terror. Maman was a much too loving soul to believe in a vengeful and unjust God.

“She often said that it would be very unjust of God to be just towards us, because that would be to demand from us more than He gave.” Therefore she found consolation in believing in His love and charity, nor could she at all believe in Hell,—Purgatory was the most she would acknowledge. Under this influence, and possibly remembering Gaime’s wisdom, Rousseau even at this time seems to have nourished germs of the belief that produced the ‘Savoyard Vicar’s Creed.’ I have already cited from the page of ‘Confessions’ where he speaks of his morning prayer as expressing devoutly exalted worship of Divinity; this was written when he was an old man, it is true, and may be only one of the many psychologic anachronisms with which ‘Confessions’ swarms; but in addition, we have a “prayer” preserved that dates from exactly this time and in this connection seems to me highly interesting.

This *prière* is essentially very different from the testament he dictated to the Notary Public in 1737—there is not the least trace of Catholicism; we find no Virgin Mary, no saints; indeed not even the name of a Christ, who has

saved us from our sins. To God alone he addresses himself:—"Almighty God, Eternal Father, my heart is uplifted in Thy presence to render Thee the homage and worship it owes Thee; my soul is permeated with Thy never-ending majesty, Thy boundless power and Thy unlimited greatness; it humbles itself before Thee filled with emotions of deepest respect for Thee and with the knowledge of its own insignificance. O, my God, I worship Thee with all my soul, I acknowledge Thee the Creator, the Protector, the Lord and absolute Master of all that exists, the eternal and divine Entity containing in itself the causes of its being, that has created all things by its own power and without whose support all creatures would at once sink back into nothingness. But, O God, whilst Thy power is unlimited, so also is Thy divine goodness. O, Father, my heart rejoices at the thought of Thy mercies and sees manifold causes for blessing Thee. Whose lips could name worthily all the benefits I have received from Thee? Thou has begotten me out of nothing; Thou hast bestowed upon me reason and judgment; in the depths of my heart hast Thou inscribed laws, obedience to which will secure for me the reward of eternal happiness, laws of justice and mercy which, if I follow them, will make me blessed even in this earthly life. . . . O, my God, forgive me all the sins I have committed up to this day, all the transgressions into which I have fallen; pity me for my weaknesses and uproot the vices into which they have led me. My conscience tells me how culpable I am. . . .

"I know that no true joys are found except those of virtue and duty. I am filled with remorse because I have abused a life and a freedom which Thou hadst bestowed upon me as a means by which I might make myself worthy of eternal bliss. Accept my repentance, O, my God. Bowed down with shame for my sins I resolve to seek absolution from them by hereafter living a truthful and dutiful life.

"I will in the future lay all my acts at the feet of Thy judgment, I will think of Thee, I will bless Thee, I will

serve Thee, I will fear Thee; I will always carry Thy laws engraved upon my heart, and all my acts shall bend to their dictation; I will love my neighbour as myself, I will, to the best of my ability, serve him body and soul, I will always remember that Thou dost desire his happiness as much as mine; I will show sympathy to the unfortunate, and help them with all my power. . . . I will never forget that Thou art witness to all my actions, and I will strive never to be guilty of anything unworthy of Thy exalted presence; I will be merciful toward others, and severe toward myself; I will withstand temptation, I will live in purity, I will be self-controlled and moderate in all things, and never yield to other joys than those that virtue permits. . . .

“Verily, O Lord, I will make use of my life for Thy service, in obedience to Thy laws and in the fulfilment of my duties; I beseech Thy blessing on these vows, which I make with my whole heart, and which I will try with all my will to observe; from sad experience I know full well that without Thy gracious assistance the sternest purposes will dwindle into inaction, but I know too, that Thou wilt never deny Thy help to one who prays to Thee in humbleness, and from the depths of an earnest heart.”

I have cited copiously from this prayer, because in several respects it seems to me to be a document that casts interesting light on Rousseau's religious nature; it is, it appears to me, much more than a mere piece of eloquence, a really true and deepfelt expression of a religious man's devotional reflections on life and its serious side, there is in this worship something of Calvin's all-absorbing conviction of God's omnipotence, and likewise something of his righteous demands for practical moral fruits that come from the glorifying of God; but in addition to this Rousseau addresses his omnipotent Creator with that humanising familiarity which certainly would appear to the ascetic Genevans as the most abominable blasphemy. There are many points of similarity between this prayer and the Savoyard vicar's

confession of faith, in which Rousseau twenty-four years after found the satisfactory expression for his religious thoughts; there is the same worship of God untrammelled by respect for dogma, the same silence in regard to the doctrine of Atonement, the same earnest emphasis of the categorical authority of conscience.

But it was quite certain that it was only at occasional uplifted moments that Rousseau rose to the pure heights of this spiritual religion; in 'Confessions' he gives examples of the most childlike superstition, nor is it at all surprising that a man with the spiritual training that he had had should so long retain these unreasonable inequalities of perception. The fear of Hell never left him; again and again the thought recurred to him: what if I should die at this moment, what would become of my soul? In order to get rid of this anxiety he resorted to the most laughable means. One day when he was amusing himself by throwing stones at a tree trunk it occurred to him that he could use this sport as a means of determining the fate of his eternal soul. "I said to myself: I will throw this stone at the opposite tree; if I hit it, that means that I shall be saved; if I miss, it means my doom. With these words I throw my stone with trembling hands and beating heart; but fortunately it strikes the tree in the centre, which was in truth far from difficult, as I had seen to it that the tree was very large, and at a very short distance. From that moment I was never afterwards in doubt of my salvation."

In this way this twenty-seven-year-old man, in complete seriousness, attempts to cheat our Lord, and undeniably it is very like the Rousseau, the thoughtless and chance-taking vagabond, whom we learned to know in former chapters. The marvellous part of it is, that it is the same man who originated the earnest prayer to which I have just referred; the thinker and the gamin go hand in hand, and each assumes power according to the shifting changes of his mood.

Neither in his moral life was he permeated by the religious ideals which at this time began to arise before his

vision; no matter how seriously at the moment he meant his good resolutions and his prayer for moral purity, nevertheless he was not mature enough for a suppliant; he was and continued to be, as we shall soon see, the same old sinner in various respects.

In the meantime his position in Mme. de Warens' house became more and more intolerable. It seems that during the winter of 1738-39 he was left behind at “Les Charmettes,” while Maman, with her Wintzenried and the rest of her household, moved into town. We have a letter from him to Maman, written the 18th of March 1738, which gives us a hint as to how things stood. “When poverty comes in at the door it seems that love, even brotherly love, flies out of the window.” Jean Jacques had been haughty toward Wintzenried, but he had begged his brother's pardon, and in this letter he also asks his mistress for forgiveness; he speaks of her love for him as something past, as only a memory, but he himself is still true, and is languishing with longing for her; it had been an entire month since he had seen her.

“Little by little I felt myself isolated and alone in that house whose soul I had been,” he writes in ‘Confessions’ describing the last days at “Les Charmettes.” “As time went on I accustomed myself to hold aloof from those who lived there, and to keep at a distance from all the household happenings; and in order to spare myself eternal wounds, I shut myself up with my books, or I wandered in the woods to sigh and weep in solitude. This sort of life soon became absolutely unbearable. It was a constant irritant to my pain to be daily so near and yet so far from the woman I loved, and I thought that out of her presence I would feel less terribly the separation from her. I therefore formed the plan of leaving the house; I told her of my resolution, and far from opposing it she rather assisted me in my plan.”

Indeed it was Mme. de Warens herself who was most active in hastening his departure; by her influence she

succeeded in securing a position for him as tutor for the two sons of Herr de Mably at Lyons, and in the spring of 1740 we find him installed there.

Rousseau's manner of entering upon this work as teacher is a new proof of the intellectual ripening that had taken place during those years at "Les Charmettes." The letter in which he accepts his situation, as well as the plan of instruction which he wrote down after a short period in de Mably's house, shows us a man who had thought deeply over pedagogical questions and who had his own independent opinions.

In his 'Projet' we find several of those thoughts with which he startled the world twenty years later on the publication of 'Émile'; it is therefore indeed worth while to study this plan somewhat more closely.

After emphasising the point that a teacher's first duty is to examine his pupil's talents and character as carefully as possible, and after accentuating the necessity of co-operation between parents and teacher, he passes on to the discussion of the object of education.

"It is," he says, "to form the child's heart, his power of judgment and his intelligence, and exactly in the order in which I name them. Most teachers, especially if they be pedants, consider that the acquisition and accumulation of information is the sole object of a good education; they fail to remember Molière's line: 'Un sot savant est plus sot qu'un sot ignorant.'

"Certainly, learning should not be neglected," he continues, "but the formation of character must come first. Of what use in the world is a man's knowledge if he is not capable of thinking correctly? As far as religion and morals are concerned, it is not of the least advantage to fill the head with all sorts of rules and regulations, but one should lead the child's mind in the direction of the good and the true by means of examples and the pupil's own experiences. On the whole as little force and severity and as much love as possible; in this way the teacher secures a hold over the

child's heart and inclinations, and ‘la droiture du cœur est la source de la justesse de l'esprit : un honnête homme pense presque toujours juste.’ ”

Time after time Rousseau urges the necessity of considering the child's particular stage of development ; “one must present the subject-matter in accordance with his age,” preferably help him to seek for himself intellectual food ; lead him imperceptibly to study so that he thinks he is doing so of his own accord ; for that reason, one must make use both of his idle time and his amusements—give him instruments to play with, a prism, a microscope, a sun-glass or other small objects that will keep him quiet and occupy his mind.

In conclusion, Rousseau sets forth a formal schedule of study. In the beginning the pupil's time should be devoted to Latin, history, and geography. As far as Latin is concerned, he would not advise a methodical study of grammar with its eternal written prose-lessons ; a young man, especially one who expects to become an officer, studies Latin in order to understand the language and not to write it, as he has no use for this accomplishment ; if he learns to read and acquires a taste for classic literature, he does not require more. He treats history and geography in the same way—advises avoidance of dry and dead material, and — a very daring step, at that time—lays greater stress on modern, especially French, history than on ancient. He would eliminate entirely a number of subjects with which young people were burdened in those days : “in my opinion, rhetoric, logic and scholastic philosophy are all quite superfluous, and besides I should be quite incapable of teaching them.”

Under any circumstances, he insists that whatever instruction be permitted in these subjects should be postponed to a more mature age, and should then be applied as training in purity of style and as an exercise to strengthen the power of judgment by inculcating order and method in reasoning. Natural history, he thinks, is of the greatest importance, but in this subject books play a secondary *rôle*—to sharpen the

powers of observation and to open the pupil's eyes to all of the phenomena of nature—these are considerations of the first importance. A knowledge of mathematics is necessary to a comprehension of the laws of physics, and in addition is of the greatest value in teaching one to think logically and with accurate correctness. Finally, in case he should keep his position long enough, he would venture to instruct his pupils in ethics and the laws of nature, using Grotius and Puffendorf as references, "because it is fitting that a cultured man should know the principles of good and evil, as well as understand that foundation on which society rests."

In addition to the subjects mentioned, one must take account also of all that is usually summarised as "the fine arts," so as to develop good taste and so as not to avoid what would prove gratifying to the young students.

Such is the content of Rousseau's pedagogical theories, as he presented it to the father of his Lyons pupils. No one can deny that they contain sound reasoning, and although they are, of course, largely obtained from his reading (chiefly from Montaigne), they are nevertheless not lacking in independence of thought. But theory is one thing, practice is another; and there was a great distance between what Rousseau would and what he could. We see that even when he compiles this 'Projet' he is not able to give the impression of authority that he might have wished. All the words—page after page—which he lavishes on the relation between teacher and pupil, all the guarantees he demands, all the support he requires from the father in forcing the pupils to treat him with the necessary esteem—all this shows that he is not the man to secure a position of power by his own unaided efforts, or in other words, he lacks the first and most indispensable of all pedagogical qualities—the power to arouse his pupils' respect.

✓ It cannot surprise us to find that Rousseau was an incapable teacher; it was not information that was lacking; he had more solid knowledge than most teachers, and besides practically no knowledge is necessary for an efficient teacher;

he was certainly in possession of a quite unusual psychologic power of divination; he saw through his pupils and did not allow them to impose upon him; but all was stranded on his moral imperfections, on his incurable frailties.

Of all pedagogical impossibilities the neurotic subject is the most helpless; the man without will-power who cannot control himself but oscillates without resistance between two extremes, is the prey of the capricious storms of his own moods. Such a teacher makes his pupils restless and uncertain, he takes from under their feet the foundation upon which they should build; he has not the power either to win their love or to arouse their fear; he becomes finally both laughable and contemptible in their eyes. This was indeed the case with Rousseau; he lacked *égalité*, he says; yes, naturally,—where in all the world could he have got it from? When everything went well he was as agreeable as an angel; but the least cross quite upset his equilibrium, and he lost all control. When he was not actually in a rage, he revolved in a circle of sermonising, sentimentalising, and agonising. But naturally the boys heard not a word of his long-drawn-out expositions of emotion or anger, and on one occasion when, moved by some naughty act of Sainte-Marie, the eldest, Rousseau melted into tears, of course the boy burst into fits of laughter over this marvellous specimen of a man; and when he allowed himself to be thrown into a frenzy by the little Condillac's contrariness, of course the young one only became more callous and felt himself quite superior to his half crazy teacher. As may be supposed he did not get along very successfully with these methods, and he had soon to acknowledge to himself that he was not fitted for his position. However, his pedagogical experiences were by no means without significance—he took advantage of them many years later when he wrote his book on education, where he—without mentioning it—sits in judgment on his own incapacity.

Rousseau's experience in Lyons was unfortunate in other respects than in his failure as a teacher. He had been recom-

mended to Madame de Mably, with the request that she should look after his manners, and if possible make of him more of a man of the world; but his helpless awkwardness and embarrassment were so extreme that she soon gave up the undertaking. Of course, in the meantime, Jean Jacques had fallen in love with her and embarrassed her by his importunate glances and misplaced sighs; however, as he received no encouragement, this aberration did not come to anything, though, of course, it did not make a very favourable impression.

It was even more deplorable that he took some of his other hideous habits to Lyons. He speaks with pride of the fact that during the years with Mme. de Warens he had quite lost the taste for "small thefts"; though this is hardly a subject for boasting, especially as the system of community of goods in vogue between them made dishonesty impossible. When opportunity presented itself he soon fell back into his old habit. It was a certain Rhine wine this time to which he took a fancy, and as he had charge of the wine-cellar, he occasionally appropriated a bottle or two for his private use.

This thievery took place with the shameful secrecy of unlawfulness; he sneaked furtively out of the house to buy cakes to eat with his wine and back again to his room, where he partook of his stolen sweets with the bad conscience of a criminal. In spite of this carefulness he was discovered; Mably took it very quietly, said not a word to Rousseau, but relieved him of all dealings with the wine-cellar. Rousseau was grateful for this discretion, but it could not have been particularly pleasant for the nearly thirty-year-old man to have been exposed thus.

His position in this noble house was not an enviable one. Despised by master, mistress, and children, his memory enhanced the joys he had experienced with "Maman," and he saw them in retrospect in a brilliant light. When he thought of her and of all the innocent pleasures they had had together his heart sank in his breast and he finally, at the end of the year, fled to her. "Hundreds of times I was

tempted to leave immediately and to go back to her, even if I should have to go afoot; if I could only see her once again, I could die happy. I could hardly endure all the sweet memories that called me to her at any cost. Again and again I said to myself that I had not been patient enough, not agreeable enough, not sufficiently affectionate; that I still might live happily in her tender friendship. . . . I make the most beautiful resolutions and burn to put them into action. I abandon everything, I give it all up, I leave, I fly, I find myself at her feet. Oh! I should have died of joy, had I found in her reception, her caresses, a fraction of the love she had given me in the olden days and which I still bore in my heart.”

Although his stay in Lyons, in its most important respect, turned out unfortunately, these months were, nevertheless, not wasted.

Besides the pedagogical experience which he was so brilliantly to make use of later, he had also made personal connections that became of some significance. As a member of the de Mably circle, he was actually in the presence of the sources of the new thought.

De Mably himself had not distinguished himself in any way, but both his younger brothers were scientists of distinction; one of them, Abbé de Mably, just at the time of Rousseau's stay in his brother's house, made himself famous as a thorough historian and statesman by the publication of his work, ‘Parallèle des Romains et des Français par rapport au gouvernement.’ At this time the Abbé did not live in Lyons (Rousseau became personally acquainted with him later), but he was in constant communication with his family, by whom he was considered an authority in many respects, and Rousseau had read his writings and shared his family's esteem for him. On the other hand, Rousseau, while in Lyons, had the advantage of personal relations, although this never amounted to intimacy, with the younger brother Condillac, the famous exponent of the enlightened philosophy of the day.

He was more intimate, however, with a number of young men who shared his intellectual interests and who were on the same social plane as he. Among these was Bordes, a member of the Academy of Lyons, and something of an author; he wrote, at a later period, a refutation of Rousseau's first 'Discours.' His literary production was not worth much; but neither had Rousseau progressed very far at that time, and Bordes influenced him by his intense interest in literary subjects, and by the zeal with which he urged him to produce something himself. Besides Bordes, his best friend in Lyons was the surgeon Parisot, a splendid creature, of whom Rousseau speaks with the warmest praise. Shortly after Rousseau's departure from Lyons, he wrote to both these men rhymed letters, which are of interest, not as poetic works, for the verses are miserable and the Muse is quite absent, but because we find in them, almost ten years before he really entered the literary field, a distinct expression of many of the thoughts and sentiments that later became so firmly identified with his name. Just as his plan of education foreshadowed 'Émile,' so are these poems similarly related to his famous treatises on the Sciences and Inequality.

In the letter to Bordes, he asks this friend, who had encouraged his Muse, why he should imagine him capable of pleasing the public: it is pleasant to wear the laurel wreath; but

Quoi ! j'irais sur le ton de ma lyre rustique
Faire jurer en vers une muse helvétique ;
Et prêcher durement de tristes vérités
Revolter contre moi les lecteurs irrités !

"But even though my verses really should by some unexpected good luck find a responsive echo, what should I write about? Every poet is a liar, and his *metier* is his excuse when, in pompous words, he transforms a rich blockhead into a new Mæcenas, a pillar of society; but I am ignorant of such subterfuges, I understand but little these fine French manners; I am a proud republican, I

suffer no condescension, I despise the protection of a rich man for whom I must cringe and crawl ; I praise only true worth, stupid vanity arouses rebellion in me. The rich man has contempt for me and I for him, but my heart abhors satire and tells the truth without gall. My pen is an irreconcilable enemy both to flattery and to malice ; it is always ready to acknowledge worth, but burns no incense for a miserably fatuous Croesus.

“ But you who, with humble modesty, nourish your virtues in poverty ; you whose wishes are simple, and who prefer wise homeliness to vain luxury ; you precious and alas ! too rare models of the ancient excellence of that bygone day when our forefathers, satisfied with little, discriminating as to virtue, indifferent as to finery, recognised no other demands than nature’s own—your praise will I gladly sing, and your names perpetuate in the temple of memory.”

Here we see distinct germs of that Rousseau destined to come, the stern moralist and truth-teller who hates and despises the rich, and castigates their luxury and artificiality, exposing them on the background of the simplicity and natural happiness of the poor and of their earlier, more primitive forefathers.

But these thoughts had not yet become propaganda for him ; on the contrary, they come from his pen involuntarily, almost resistingly ; the bitter experiences of his own poverty are too recent for him to be able to become Frugality’s apostle ; his Muse has really not much faith in the pictures she painted for her own inspection.

“ But,” he continues, “ why dwell on an empty chimera ? Wisdom and poverty are no longer congenial ; goodness falls fainting under the weight of hunger, and virtue dies out in the hearts of the wretched. It is only the rich who speak of the happiness of poverty ; it is easy to preach those virtues which the preacher himself has no occasion to practice.”

His Muse, therefore, turns to other subjects, and the poem closes with a laudation of Lyons and its industries—a transi-

tion quite out of harmony with his "rustic lyre" and the gloomy intonation of the opening chords.

We find the "Epistle to Parisot" somewhat similar, though more considerable and more heartfelt, but of no great poetic worth. The contents are of interest in several respects. He tries to give his friend an account of his development, where he stands now, and what his dreams for the future amount to. He was born in darkness, he says, and from childhood has been a toy in the hands of a Fate that never abandoned him, that persecuted him even when bringing gifts.

"She permitted me to be born free; but, alas! to what purpose shall I put this freedom? She sold this insignificant advantage dear! I have suffered more from it than from real unhappiness.

"Ah! if I was destined in exile to drag out the slow length of my life among strangers, if I was bound to cringe miserably to the great—why did I not learn the art in my younger days? It was as the recipient of quite other knowledge that I passed my youth. I was asked only to fulfil my duty; to honour the great, kings and magistrates, without lowliness of spirit; to love my fellow-creatures; to obey the laws; I was taught that I had a right to participate in the highest power; although an insignificant unknown citizen, I was yet a unit of sovereignty; the question at stake was to uphold this noble right with a courageous heart and a wise spirit; liberty, that gift of Heaven, is a scourge of Fate only when in the hands of the vicious. We suck this wisdom in with our mother's milk, not so that we may become arrogant over our rights, but that one day we may be able to give ourselves the best rulers and the wisest laws.

"They said to us: 'Look at the brilliant course of the mighty nations. All this senseless splendour that fills the universe is only worldly trumpery which hides their chains. . . . They play at being conquerors, but are only wretched slaves. Their power, artificially produced, will soon be

annihilated by their luxury. With us, stress is laid on very different ambitions: our strength lies in our weakness, we live satisfied in humble inconspicuousness; but Freedom reigns within our walls. We have no knowledge of proud insolence, no glittering titles, no unjust sway; wise representatives, chosen by our own direct vote, judge of our controversies, watch over our laws. Diplomacy is not the pillar of our republic; justice is our only policy; all classes, differing without being unequal, retain severally the rank that has been accorded to them. Our chiefs, our magistrates, simple in dress, without luxury or gilding, are not lost to view in the crowd, but distinguish themselves by their virtue.' . . . Brought up on such principles, my reason taught me to despise the insane splendour by means of which the haughtiness of rich men radiates in all directions, and attracts to itself the glances of the foolish mob.”

Everyone who has read the celebrated dedication with which Rousseau ten years later prefaces his discourse (on Inequality) will recognise in these weak verses the thoughts that he develops with such overpowering eloquence in that work. Yes, here and there he strikes chords which he does not repeat until in ‘Contrat social’ more than twenty years later. But he has not yet woven these thoughts into his life’s content, his mind oscillates between that which is the trend of his heart’s feeling and that which intelligence teaches him is wise. Certainly he is a true Genevan, proud of being the virtuous and unbending republican; yet he sees that these maxims are not in vogue outside of Geneva, and the question is how to conduct himself in order to attain the qualities necessary to the success his ambition longs for. He sees the way, and is rather sure that he has already made progress on it. Mme. de Warens has helped him in many ways; she pointed out to him his delusions, and made him feel the need of improving his habits and his bearing.

“I forswore for the future the cruel maxims that are the bitter and over-ripe fruits of my country’s prejudices, on

which the pride of the republican heart is nourished from childhood; I learned to respect a glittering nobility, which knows how to give new splendour to virtue itself. It would not be good for society if there were less inequality between classes. Shall I ride about on my stupid hobby-horse as a declaimer or a new Don Quixote? Fate has ordered distinctions of rank in this world, and will certainly not change them for my sake."

And what Mme. de Warens had begun Parisot and his friends continued. In Lyons Rousseau had become more *traitable*; in a milder climate and among cultured friends he had learned to appreciate life's charm and social pleasure, brilliant conversation and a festive meal, enlivened by the cheerful jest of agreeable guests; he had come to understand that some pleasures are innocent, and "that nothing should be exaggerated, not even virtue."

But then comes the question: does Parisot think that he, Rousseau, has progressed far enough on this way so as to become successful in the world? "Am I now ready to attain success? I have almost filled my thirtieth year; half of my days have already passed in obscurity; and my eagerness for work is already diminished. I have spent my time in studying and in practising virtue, and I believed that my talents would make my fortune; but experience has taught me otherwise. I recognise too late that I have neglected to acquire the arts, the dissimulation, the flattery which are necessary to gain success. O, no! I can never force my spirit which was born honest to deny its own character in this way. It would be too difficult a yoke for my heart to bear,—I discard success if it demands such an unworthy price."

His soul fluctuates between such extremes, between honours and the price he must give for them on the one side, his own character and deepest inclinations on the other. In order to bring this question to a conclusion he asks Parisot for help in his rhymed letter. "Judge of my future with this perspective; see then, if I with impotent

zeal should still offer useless incense to success.” And he answers himself: “No, glory is not the idol of my soul, I do not feel the flame of the divine fire,—which forces one forward in a noble struggle. And anyhow what do I care for the judgment of mankind? Is it their marks of honour or their contempt that make us what we are, and even if one does not understand the art of making others admire him, he is not obliged on that account to give up the hope of being happy. Burning ambition carries splendour in its train; but the joys of the heart are the wise man’s happiness. Happy is he who knows these joys and can find peace in them; to enjoy them in all their salutary and pacific mildness is the dearest wish of my heart. And now it is in vain that happiness tries to hide itself; for now I know where I must seek in order to find it.”

We cannot unreservedly believe his words; glory was still certainly the only idol of his heart, and he doubtless did feel the divine fire. Many years passed before he discovered that the way to glory is reached, not through hypocrisy and flattery, such as he still imagined, but through devotion to his own ideals—the very joys of which he speaks. The day came when his youthful ideals and his mature hate burst through his half-wise worldliness, and, mighty and unhindered, sounded forth on the tones of one of the noblest instruments of speech that the world has heard. At the moment, when he dared to speak his own language, to express his own anguish, and to light the flame of his own hate—at that moment he had the world at his feet, the world and such glory as he had never dreamed of.

But happiness?

Of this we shall hear more later.

When he returned from Lyons he found nothing that he had hoped for. Maman received him with the amiability that never forsook her; but the past was over, and continued so, and did not permit resuscitation. Rousseau’s situation seemed irremediable, and that in spite of the fact that he evidently strove to be good friends with Wintzenried

or de Courtilles, as he now called himself. Jean Jacques felt superfluous, poor thing, and the financial situation was worse than ever. Wintzenried, who had charge of the funds, was a spendthrift; he liked to shine, kept good horses and a luxurious equipage to impress the neighbours, and undertook extensive speculations, of which he had no understanding. Things went steadily down, Maman's pension was always drawn in advance, the house-rent was unpaid, debts increased, and Rousseau saw with terror that unavoidable ruin was approaching.

As he did not feel that his company was particularly desirable he kept to himself, showed himself only at meals, and found his only consolation in his study, where he built air-castles, and dreamed of extracting his dear Maman from the net that was drawing closer and closer about her. He did not consider himself learned or gifted enough to win a name in literature and find there the necessary treasures. But another idea occurred to him; he had not entirely given up music during his student years, but he had always found it difficult to decipher the notes, and had never learned to read easily from sight; many years before he had devised a new method of replacing the old-fashioned notes with figures. But this attempt was stranded on difficulties that he could not manage; his present effort was successful. "I succeeded in writing down any sort of music by means of figures,—with the greatest accuracy, and I must say with the greatest simplicity. From that moment I considered my fortune made; and in my burning zeal to share it with her to whom I owed everything, I thought only of getting off to Paris, as I did not doubt that it would cause a revolution when I should lay my system before the Academy. Fourteen days later my decision was made and carried out. In short, filled with the wonderful visions that had inspired me,—the same dreamer I had always been,—I set forth from Savoy with my music-system, just as I had once, many years before, departed from Turin with my circulating fountain."

XII.

M A M A N.

BEFORE we follow Rousseau to that great capital where his destiny was afterwards to be fulfilled, we must stop for a little and try to obtain a collected impression of the woman who for fourteen years had been his providence. From Easter 1728 until the summer of 1742, Mme. de Warens had been the centre of Rousseau's life. Time after time he had left her house to try to seek his fortune unaided, but on five different occasions he had returned to her, more or less shipwrecked, and had found the haven he needed. He lavishes all the splendour of his rich eloquence on the gilding of her good name. His admiring imagination paints her in the most vivid colours—her peculiar beauty, her charm, her wit, her learning,—but first and last, her noble, splendid heart; her self-sacrifice, her uncalculating and always willing kindness—the atmosphere of love that emanates from her and that ennobles all who come into contact with her. But nevertheless, judging from much of what he himself relates of her, and from what we learn from other sources, it is impossible for us to look upon her as a sun without spots.

We cannot deny that she was an extremely problematical lady, it is true, one from whom we do not wholly withhold our sympathy, but whom we can by no means look upon with unalloyed respect.

We become suspicious as soon as we learn of the manner in which she, in her youth, goes over to Catholicism. In this step religious scruples obviously play a very slight part,

we may say, practically none. Her position in her husband's house had become intolerable owing to her own actions, and when she fled to the King of Sardinia and offered him her services in the Catholic cause, it was certainly not solicitude for her soul's salvation that prompted her, but rather the hope of a temporal subsistence. What lay closest to her heart was a life-pension and not the propaganda of Catholicism. And, in spite of the ampleness of this pension, it was not sufficient for her needs, and her whole life was occupied in scraping together an increased income by other means, the choice of which was not always so fastidious as it might have been. One of the dark spots in her life is connected with a trip to Paris with a relative d'Aubonne, which took place shortly after her meeting with Rousseau; the object of the journey and her *rôle* in the story are not fully brought to light, but this much can one say: that it was concerned with political intrigues, and that she proved herself not unwilling to venture out on the slippery way of espionage and to eke out her fortune with saleable state secrets, obtained in a doubtful way—at any rate she was not successful, though this has little to do with the point; but on the whole, there was undeniably much too much “business”—and that not always of the most honourable variety—in her life. Her eternal dabbling in alchemy, which of course never resulted in anything, is innocent enough in itself, even though alchemy and fraud have always had close communion with each other; much worse are all her speculations, her buying and selling of stocks, her mining enterprises, and all the suspicious business connections they brought her. She was not only inordinately careless and conscienceless in the way in which she took risks involving other people's welfare, but she was occasionally guilty of finesses that were not wholly irreproachable; she wrote several business letters, still in preservation, the contents of which, while they would not actually subject her to the penal law, nevertheless would not hold water for a sterner court of business morals.

If we can believe Rousseau's account of Maman's love

affairs, there is a strong business element present here too, in a domain where we like least to find it. The manner in which she time after time gives herself to the men she has use for—indeed to several at a time,—and, without the least passion on her part, uses this means of knitting them in a closer friendship is, to say the least, extremely repulsive; and the combination of motherliness and sensuality which characterises her relationship to Rousseau is rather disgusting.

In spite of her noble birth and title it is impossible to describe Mme. de Warens as a fine lady, in the best meaning of the words. Her coquetry was not of the first class; her association with men not such as to inspire confidence; the freedom with which she chose her lovers from among her servants—the gardener, Claude Anet, the vagabond Rousseau, the wig-maker Wintzenried,—all this contributed to cast a shadow on her reputation. And this, in connection with her constant financial difficulties, the eternal money-borrowing, the never-ending procession of adventurers and doubtful personages coming and going, made her house, which at first had been a rendezvous for Savoy's most distinguished society, soon sink in estimation, so that it became a place where ladies at least were noticeably absent, and after a time one which men who possessed more fastidious social requirements also avoided. When this decadence once began it steadily continued, and things went down, as is usual, with increasing rapidity. When Rousseau, twelve years after his final departure from Chambéry, was journeying in that part of the country and made a détour in order to pay his respects to Maman in those dear haunts, the encounter was a painful experience.

"I saw her again . . . in what a condition! O my God! What degradation! What remnant of her early virtues was there to see? Could this be the same Mme. de Warens who was once so radiant? My heart was torn asunder. I saw no escape for her other than to flee from the country."

These considerations lead to an obvious question: was it

an advantage to Rousseau that his fate was for so many years knitted to this woman? With the knowledge we have of her and of him, the inclination to answer in the negative is forced upon us.

She does not appear to have possessed many of the qualities that would make her fitted to be his guide. As we know, he had had the misfortune to lose his mother at his birth—he had never had a sister; Aunt Suzon as well as Jacqueline had been good and kind, but they were without education, and besides, he had left home very early, so he had been deprived of the vitally important advantage of a woman's normal influence in his youth. Mlle. Lambergier had involuntarily lighted the sickly flame of his sexual life at too early an age; the women he had run across in the course of his most critical years had abnormally inflamed his senses, but had not inspired in him the least respect for their sex. Mme. de Warens was certainly not the one who could give him what he lacked; her attitude towards love was not such that she could give him glimpses of womanly superiority and of the sacredness of love. Maman's erotic cynicism doubtless contributed somewhat to the incompleteness of his conceptions, for, in spite of his deep understanding of the erotic, he yet lacked something—modesty, appreciation of or simply knowledge of the beauty and the mystery of the undefiled. The heroine in his famous novel has great depths of feeling, but her manners lack chasteness, she holds long speeches, and not in veiled terms, on subjects of which normal young girls have no knowledge, or at least would hardly confess to themselves. In other respects also, Mme. de Warens lacked qualities that might have been of assistance to Rousseau's development.

His moral education had been thoroughly neglected; neither his father's sentimentality, Lambergier's lack of intelligence, nor Ducommun's brutality had had a fortunate influence on him; his violent temper had never learned self-control; he lied, when it was convenient; he stole, when he saw something he wanted; he wandered out on life's way

without any moral standard that might warn him of an impassable boundary line. But neither were Mme. de Warens' manners and actions marked by the inevitable honourableness of character that might have supplied him with what he lacked. She could preach moral sermons for him, but they simply bored him; and what he saw about him—slovenliness everywhere, lack of trustworthiness; the "laisser-aller" that permeated the atmosphere of the house,—all this was only too congenial to his own character and to his own past. After twelve years' friendship with her we find him, as soon as opportunity presented itself, exhibiting many of the same lax principles he had always displayed.

And yet, a broad view forces us to look on Mme. de Warens as Rousseau's salvation. In the rhymed letter to Parisot, among other things, he writes of her:—

"I do not so much count her helpful kindness; I owe her other things that have more worth. . . . Before her goodness dragged me up out of the lap of misery, I was a wretched child, abandoned by Fate, perhaps destined to go to the bottom with the dregs."

This is undoubtedly true, and certainly is not the least exaggerated. When Rousseau, sixteen years of age, presented himself for the first time to Mme. de Warens, he was far from being a hopeful youth; it is not saying too much when he writes "perhaps destined to go to the bottom with the dregs." When he left Savoy for good, fourteen years later, he had become another creature; naturally he had not changed his nature, nor, as we have seen, had he discarded all of the hideous habits that he had adopted during his highwayman period; but nevertheless he had undergone a tremendous evolution: in demeanour, in knowledge, in thoughtfulness, in conscious purpose—he was absolutely unrecognisable.

Although during these years he had, as we know, wandered about considerably and had had many experiences, had picked up aids to development here and there, yet the chief

credit for his transformation must be given to Mme. de Warens. Even though she did lack many of the requirements for an ideal "Maman" for her sophisticated ward, she had others which were instrumental in causing her to exert an active and, in all essentials, a serviceable influence on his development.

She was the first cultivated woman that had crossed his path. Thanks to her noble extraction, to the society in which she had moved all her youthful days, to the good education she had received, she had by chance acquired a sureness and distinction of manner genuine enough to make a youth of Jean Jacques' qualifications look up to her. At a critical moment of his life he found in her one in whose presence guilt might feel abashed, one for whom he might take pains, to whose heights he might strive to reach; the aspiring element in his nature saw in her a brilliant representative of the great world of which he had heretofore only dreamed, and therefore for many years it was a matter of course that she should be the self-appointed judge of his strivings towards perfection. Whenever his *penchant à dégénérer* took possession of him, his thoughts turned towards her remorsefully; when he had a triumph to relate he hastened to her side. It was long before he observed in her character the blemishes to which we cannot be blind, and for a considerable number of years she stood on a jealously guarded pedestal in his consciousness. On the other hand, there was something in her nature that lessened the chasm between them. Her affectionate heart met half-way his impetuous desire for tenderness, and inspired in him the faith and confidence that his vacillating nature required to feel toward one who should exert any influence or power over him.

And Mme. de Warens had not only a tender soul, to a certain extent she had likewise a cultured intelligence, enough at least to teach Jean Jacques a great deal; she was well-read and experienced, and her mind was awake to many of the questions that had begun to twitter in the air

toward the middle of the century. Neither in this respect was the chasm between her and her young friend so great that they could not meet; her culture was not so complete, her taste not so fastidious that she lost patience. She herself was only half-educated, questioning, doubting; she had not reached so far but that it amused her to entertain herself with the wide-awake boy; she did not have to stoop much in order to reach his plane; they read together and they discussed together, she enjoyed being mentor, and she directed his intelligence towards weighty subjects and serious intellectual work. By the time he departed from "Les Charmettes," he had sailed long past her, but it must not be forgotten that she was the one (or at least the most important one) that gave the impetus to his fruitful self-application.

The moral influence she exerted on him was without doubt very analogous. As we have seen, she was by no means a model of virtue, so that neither was the chasm here so great as to make her unapproachable; in spite of her deficiencies, or perhaps on account of them, it was easy for her to find the way to his heart; if she had been a strict moralist, if her bearing had been distinguished by a strong character's innate repulsion for every form of laxness or moral irresponsibility, Jean Jacques would probably have fled from her presence and never come under her influence. The "laissez-faire" which marked Mme. de Warens' nature, the indulgence with which she connived at questionable acts, was almost a vital necessity for Rousseau; punishment, even upbraidings, would have driven him at once out into the wilderness. Thus Maman's moral weaknesses became, as it were, the condition on which her moral influence over him rested; and it was not little, for with all her imperfections she towered high over the uncouth vagabond she took to her motherly bosom. She had lived among many kinds and conditions of men, she had thought over moral values, she was open-hearted and communicative, was glad to talk with her young friend about the results that life and reading had

brought her ; she aroused thoughtfulness in him, she planted the germs of his self-education.

But of still greater importance than her more highly developed moral culture were the inherently noble qualities of her nature—in one word, her untiring benevolence ; in the first place, her never-failing hospitality toward him, her helpfulness, her tender care during his illness ; secondly, the atmosphere of kindness that radiated from her, her always prompt and active charitableness. She could not look upon pain without wanting to alleviate it, her house and purse were open to every ruffian that suffered need ; she did not question, she did not consider, she only gave,—more than she was justified in giving, but always from the fulness of her warm, sympathetic heart. I believe that it was of decisive importance for Rousseau that he, at such an early age, came into and lived so long in this atmosphere of goodness. Michelet somewhere writes of Rousseau : “ From the moment his ardent words became diffused into the air the temperature changed ; it is as though a warm breath were exhaled out over the world ; the earth begins to fructify as never before.” Yes, and that flood of feeling which was to prove Rousseau’s ever-memorable contribution to the world’s history was, if not created, at least in a high degree nourished, in Mme. de Warens’ house. His nature possessed not only strong instinctive tendencies of love towards his fellow-creatures, but also of contempt, even hate, of them. His embarrassment, his slinking abasement, his Genevan brusqueness, the abnormal soil lying at the bottom of his soul, combined with the many bitter experiences of his life to make him seek to avoid the society of men, to retire into himself, and this tendency might easily have developed into an irremediable misanthropy, instead of only showing itself sporadically, as was the case. But when we find that, in spite of these opposing influences, he retained the moral optimism that is so indissolubly connected with his name, we must undoubtedly give not a small share of the credit to Mme. de Warens. Indeed, during Rousseau’s

life, he discovered very few bright spots in the world that surrounded him, and the longer he lived the more rare these became; his experience gave him more and more convincing proofs of the meanness, the maliciousness, the hypocrisy, and the viciousness of mankind; he looked more and more darkly on society—its dissimulation and humbug—a white-washed tomb, full of rottenness and filth; but when high above his constant cries of anguish over the world's paltriness, we hear him proclaim with never-failing consistency his unconquerable conviction of the original goodness of human nature, I cannot but believe that his faith found rich nourishment, perhaps its first foundation, in the fortunate circumstance that in his youth he came into contact with a woman who, with all her sinful frailties, was nevertheless through and through the good creature that Mme. de Warens was.

Maman's influence was of importance to Rousseau in religious respects too. It may seem strange to speak of religious piety in a creature whose erotic life was quite lacking in ideality, whose business affairs were more than questionable, and who was even guilty of changing her faith on grounds that had very little to do with religion. And yet the human soul is a complex organism, and Mme. de Warens' religion was no jest; it was sober earnest. She had grown up under strong religious influence. Left an orphan at an early age, she had gone to live with two aunts who were strongly affected by the pietistic movement which had originated in Germany about 1700, and had thence reached Romanesque Switzerland. The leader of the revival there was an official, Magny, who was often a guest in the aunts' house and afterwards also became Mme. de Warens' guardian.

As was the case with the first German Pietists and Illuminati, Magny did not lay much stress on the dogmatic side of religion. The chief point was warmth of feeling, depth of emotion, gentleness of heart; opposition to the Catholic Church was almost a matter of indifference to them,

they were quite free from the fanaticism against Papists that both Lutherans and Calvinists exhibited. In this we see mitigating circumstances for Mme. de Warens' having gone so lightly over to the Roman Church as soon as exterior causes made it desirable, just as it also explains why Magny seems to have taken her defection quietly and without the least dismay. Magny followed his ward's career with interest and sympathy up to his death (1730), and Mme. de Warens never forgot him. She did not always behave to his satisfaction, but she always appeared in his eyes as one of whose salvation there was hope. When she made her brilliant marriage with Baron de Warens she lived in a worldly whirl, which was not at all to the taste of Magny and his pietistic friends. He wrote to her words of warning; her reply was full of respect for her old teacher, but she nevertheless insists on her right to live her own life. "I acknowledge that my life must seem singular to such a man as you, whose whole heart is consumed with piety." But she begs him to remember the position she fills on account of her marriage, the social duties it involves, and she points out that the diversions she indulges in are more innocent than he believes; she has never wished to be ostentatious and supercilious over the wealth that has fallen to her lot, but she thinks that it is right to use it, and to obtain in a modest manner the pleasures which it makes accessible.

"It may be that my youth blinds me and causes me to see life in a false light, but I can assure you that I feel very little wrapped up in my possessions; I do what is demanded of me with an indifference that often surprises me. . . . I shall consider myself very fortunate if I continue to be the same in this respect, so that when I shall finally come to depart from this life I shall be able to do so without pain, and can break with ease the ties that may still bind me as long as I live upon this earth. . . ."

These are not mere phrases composed in order to relieve her teacher's inquietude; they are earnest, an expression of serious self-examination; her after-life shows that her heart

did not cling to treasure; when she later indulged in business speculations it was not from covetousness, but in order to rescue herself from embarrassments and to be able to squander money liberally. With all her light-mindedness Mme. de Warens' was not a base worldly nature; she was not satisfied with the vulgar joys that money can secure; the eyes of her soul looked upwards, and in her way she was constantly concerned with the grave questions of life. We have another evidence of the religious trend of her character; it comes from her friend de Conzié, who, we have heard, was also Rousseau's friend. In his latter days he wrote a memorial to her, from which we learn that, even though she had changed her faith without much deliberation, she did not escape scruples and compunctions of conscience afterwards.

From what Rousseau relates in his 'Confessions,' Mme. de Warens observed faithfully the forms of worship of the Catholic Church; she read the masses and did not neglect her fasting; her feminine imagination felt the spell of the sense-intoxicating ceremonies, which made no appeal to the Genevan Jean Jacques. However, this was not the main point in her religiousness, nor were the dogmas nor the tenets of the creed; she took the symbolic writings lightly enough, and evolved a catechism based on no system whatever, but in accordance with her own needs—the needs of her own heart, for emotion was the strongest element in her worship of God. She had developed this under the influence of Magny and the Pietists, who, in their selfless immersion in the Divine Spirit, lean on the one side toward the early Mystics, and on the other towards certain phases of modern Pantheism. Mme. de Warens had by no means thought all this out, nor had it, in other ways, made any lasting impression on her composite and rather disjointed consciousness. The chief point was that she was—at least spasmodically—religiously inclined. This was the reason that she really was of help to Jean Jacques when sickness came and anxiety and thoughts of death assailed him. He

found peace and consolation in her abounding love, her gentle conviction of a fatherly providence, and she had her share in laying the foundation of the philosophy of religion that was destined to find such eloquent expression in the 'Savoyard Vicar's Creed.' If Mme. de Warens—in common with many distinguished women of her time—had been an "esprit fort," having only derision and ridicule for religious questions, it is not certain that Rousseau would have become the man he did.

The first production that Rousseau published was a poem called "*Le Verger des Charmettes*," which was printed in London in 1739. It is a eulogy, and at the same time a defence, of Mme. de Warens, and, in spite of its very slight poetical value, is interesting from a biographical point of view. It is a contemporaneous description of Jean Jacques' life at "*Les Charmettes*," and contains many allusions to his reading during that time, and gives an account of a large number of writers whom he studied.

Those lines in the poem in which he sums up all for which he feels grateful to his motherly friend run thus:—

"From my childhood days you have untiringly guided me,—in spite of my vileness you were yet sure that heaven had bestowed some talents upon me—you condescended to turn my heart toward virtue—you let me call you by the tender name of mother—accept therefore this day my sincere homage,—disdain not the well-deserved tribute that my gratitude renders to truth. Yes, if my life and nature have ever been sweetened by the dew of gentleness—if I to-day am free from envy of any sort,—if I—with a more tender heart and purer spirit—perhaps have raised myself above the common herd; yes, when I daily yield myself to deliberative contemplation, whether it be to lift my thoughts upwards toward the Divine Being or—in the depths of my soul—to brood over the transgressions of men—their virtues or their vices—when I speculate on the laws of nature and, drawing nearer to the secret of eternal causes, attempt to

penetrate all the motives, all the hidden principles that animate the universe,—I, who enjoy the grace of such treasures, must repeat once again: It is your work, O virtuous Warens, it was you that bestowed upon me true human happiness, it was you that opened my eyes to life's abiding worth."

XIII.

PARIS.

ROUSSEAU arrived in Paris probably in the latter part of July 1742; on his way he had stopped for a time in Lyons to see his friends and to secure some letters of introduction as well as a little ready money by selling his books; this time he met Abbé de Mably in person, from whom he obtained letters to the celebrated aged philosopher, Fontenelle, and to the well-known artistic and scientific dilettante, Count Caylus. Besides these and several other letters of introduction and the music-system before mentioned, he had in his pocket on arriving in Paris 15 louis d'or and his comedy 'Narcisse'; these were the weapons with which he thought to conquer Paris. He put up at the hotel Saint Quentin, Rue des Cordiers, in the neighbourhood of the Sorbonne; it was "a wretched street, a wretched hotel, a wretched room." But many celebrated men were in the habit of staying there—Gresset, Mably, Condillac,—and it was a good omen for a man who had gone to seek celebrity. However, he met none of them at that time, but he did make the acquaintance of a M. de Bonnefond, a provincial nobleman, lame and somewhat eccentric, who presented him to a M. Roguin, and he in his turn secured him admittance to the presence of Diderot, although no intimacy arose between them for the moment. Besides Père Castel, of whom I shall have more to say later, it was especially M. de Boze, of those to whom he had been recommended, from whose acquaintance he derived most advantage. De Boze was secretary of the

Académie des Inscriptions, and therefore stood on a friendly footing with members of the Academy, and it was here that Rousseau first of all applied to be given the opportunity to lay his music-system before the authorities, who, he thought, were to minister to his celebrity. De Boze spoke of the matter to Réaumur; the latter agreed to arrange the whole affair and call a meeting.

On the 22nd of August, Rousseau stood before these worthy gentlemen and delivered the thesis he had composed in explanation of his musical "revolution."

What his invention aimed at was a thorough-going simplification of the musical sign-language. His explanation ran thus:—The system now in use is, on account of its complexity, quite confusing, obscure, often ambiguous, and makes the music it represents unnecessarily difficult to learn. This is a thing long since admitted, and there have been in the course of time several attempts made to supply the lack, but heretofore without success. The proposed reforms, in some cases, have not been sufficiently comprehensive and radical, in others impossible, from a practical view-point; they have come partly from musicians who lacked theoretical insight, partly from theorists without the necessary musical experience.

It is necessary to find a system with a sign-language as simple, limited, and practicable as possible, by means of which it will be possible to indicate in the plainest way the value of the tones, as well as their duration—rests and time,—in short, all the characteristics of music. After careful consideration figures appear to be the desirable symbols; in the first place, they have the advantage of being generally known to everybody and do not need to be learned, but in addition to this—and of course this is the chief point—numbers are, by their very nature, the most natural emblem of the tones themselves.

In music, the different tones never make their appearance isolated or independent of each other, but they stand always and everywhere in interrelation, whether they be

heard simultaneously or one after the other. It is therefore not necessary that every single tone should be expressed by a special sign that describes this tone exclusively; it is sufficient, by the use of a relative expression, to indicate the position the tone takes in relation to a certain key-note. This key must be determined definitely and distinctly, and the relation of the other tones to it must be easily recognisable. In ordinary note-writing neither the one nor the other is the case; but by the help of figures it is easy to attain both. Indeed figures express only relationship, so they are just what we need, because as far as the tones also are concerned relationships are the only things to be expressed.

Let us take *do* or C as our key-note and characterise it by the figure 1; in this case the figures 1 to 7 give a clear expression for the seven tones in the natural or diatonic scale; they characterise the relationship of the single tones to each other, as well as their relationship to the key-note. As long as the song or melody is confined within the limits of these seven tones it will be sufficient to characterise each of them by its corresponding figure, and thereby they would all be clearly and unambiguously determined. But if it becomes necessary to pass from the given octave to a higher or lower, we only need to draw a horizontal line and write all the notes of the given octave on it, and those that belong to the higher or lower octave over or under the line. The position of the notes which in ordinary writing changes at every single interval, changes here only at every octave, and a single line is sufficient for the characterisation of the compass of three octaves. But if one should need more octaves, one has only to make use of new lines; three lines are therefore sufficient to characterise a compass of six or seven octaves.

So far it is easy to follow Rousseau in his invention, but when he tries to go further and find symbols for time, keys, rests, transpositions, &c., he gets the better of a man who is not at home in music. We must be satisfied in establishing the fact that Rousseau himself was quite

convinced, and many have since agreed with him—that in numbers he had found a means by which one could symbolise all kinds of musical compositions in a manner infinitely easier both to write and to read than the usual method, and it was an exposition of this that he delivered before the Academy; he expected this meeting to prove the turning-point in his career, the transition from the earlier darkness to the sunlight of the fame that hereafter was to shine upon him.

The reading went well; he was by no means so frightened as he expected to be, and he answered intelligently all the questions that were put to him. He had every reason to be satisfied; the worthy gentlemen overwhelmed him with compliments, which pleased him tremendously, and the outcome was that an expert committee was appointed to examine the matter more carefully and make a report. The members of the committee were de Mairan, Hellot, and de Fouchy—"all three certainly men of merit," writes Rousseau, "but none of them understood music—at least not enough to be able to pass judgment on my system."

Now this was not quite correct; it is true Hellot was only known as a clever chemist, and as far as any one knew had never had anything to do with music; but de Fouchy played several instruments with great skill, and de Mairan was not only one of France's greatest mathematicians and physicists, but he had also written a special theoretical work on music and had originated a theory, worthy of notice though never later corroborated, on the reasons why two or more tones can be simultaneously distinguished by the human ear. We are therefore safe in assuming that the Academy had appointed the best expert authority they had at their command; nevertheless the result was quite different from what Rousseau had hoped. Fourteen days after the first meeting the committee laid its report before the Academy, and it contained only a very conditional appreciation. "Although," so ran the document, "the method of writing notes in a single horizontal line and with

numbers is not new, as the ancients used it, and as an attempt was made to put it in practice more than sixty-five years ago, nevertheless it must be acknowledged that M. Rousseau's application of this method is of quite unusual scope, and that what he has added to it stamps it in a certain way as his own property. Further, the Academy finds that his work is executed with art and presented with great clearness, that the author is master of the material he handles, and that it is to be hoped he will continue his investigations as to how to make the practice of music easier."

In spite of this polite appreciation, the result of the investigation was that the Academy found that Rousseau's method was neither new nor practicable in the form in which it had been presented. Rousseau's disappointment was excessive, and the bitterness he felt over the real or imagined injustice he had suffered rings in the words with which he thirty years afterwards reported this painful experience in 'Confessions.' "During my interviews with these gentlemen I became convinced—and the certainty of my conviction was only equalled by my surprise—that, if sometimes learned men have fewer prejudices than other people they hold all the more tenaciously to those they do have. Their objections were for the most part weak and incorrect; I acknowledge that I answered timidly and expressed myself badly; but no matter how conclusive my arguments were, I did not succeed a single time in making them understand me completely or in satisfying them. I have always been nonplussed by the lightness with which they refuted my statements in a few euphonious phrases without having understood me."

Rousseau then appealed from the judgment of the Academy to the greatest musical authority of the day, Rameau. But Rameau, notwithstanding his unparalleled knowledge of music, was not the man to rejoice over other people's exploits, and, although he certainly perceived the advantages of the figure-symbols, he laid most stress on the faults which, it

must be confessed, were easily seen. So neither was there any help to be got from that quarter. Rousseau acknowledged this time that the objections were justified; but he did not succumb on that account, and tried to correct the weaknesses that Rameau had pointed out, and went to work to equip himself so as to conquer the general public. He shut himself in his room and worked night and day, so as to complete a rather extensive treatise in which he explained his system in a more detailed and more popular form. Notwithstanding all opposition there was not a shadow of doubt in his mind as to the epoch-making significance of his plan. The difficulty was to find a publisher, but this was overcome by the help of his friend Bonnefond. At the same time he tried other means to attract attention; it was necessary to show the practical advantages of the system, and with this object in view, he gave an American lady lessons after his method—with brilliant results; in the course of a few months she could sing any sort of music at sight with the greatest ease. "This result was conclusive," says Rousseau, "but never became known. Any one else would have filled the newspapers with it, but, although I am not without talent in originating useful inventions, I have no capabilities in advertising them."

But in this he certainly underrates himself; for in his 'Dissertation sur la musique moderne,' which is an extensive explanation of his music-system, he proves himself to be in possession of a quite considerable demagogical talent; he is certainly not backward in praising his wares or in flattering the public who is to buy them. He has applied, he says, to the musicians and the academicians, and now he addresses himself to the people themselves; he tells them that after all they are the ones he depends on; they are the ones who suffer under the old system, and they are the ones who will profit by the new; they should not allow themselves to be dictated to by the authorities who have only their own interest at heart and whose prejudices should not be the law of the people; it is only necessary to become

familiar with his method ; his book is written with so much clearness that it does not demand any study, one needs only to read through it in order to be converted, and thousands of the people who have talent for music but who have not time to plod through the labyrinth of the old note-writing, if they will only follow him on the new and easy road, will hereafter be able to practise this noble art.

And he did not limit himself to what he wrote in his own book ; he also understood how to set the press in motion in his cause. Abbé Desfontaines, one of the most respected journalists of the day, whom Rousseau knew personally, wrote an extremely appreciative account of 'Dissertation,' and others followed in his footsteps ; the press did its duty.

But all this was of no avail ; the musical revolution to which Jean Jacques certainly had pinned his hopes never came about. The public neither bought nor read his book, the sale did not cover the costs, there was some little talk of the new invention for a few days, as long as it was being mentioned in the papers ; but then other novelties appeared and the whole thing was soon forgotten. However, Rousseau never gave up his belief in the advantages of his system, and only a few years before his death wrote a long letter to Charles Burney, the learned English musician, in which he tried most earnestly to convince him of the excellence of his method. But he himself never lived to see it make a success ; it was not until long after his death that it reached a certain amount of popularity and a limited degree of application.¹

¹ The German Natorp was the first to succeed in utilising Rousseau's invention ; in 1813 he had it introduced into the public school and singing classes. In France, a few years later, Pierre Galin, professor of mathematics in Bordeaux, did the same, and among his followers Aimé Paris and Émile Chevé distinguished themselves. In the form in which these men used Rousseau's method, it finally won approval in Switzerland also. Pastor Montaudan, in 1861, succeeded in introducing it into schools in Geneva, and a Genevan music-teacher, Alphonse Meylan, in 1872 and 1877 wrote a text-book for practice. The so-called tonic sol-fa method which is in use in England is also connected with Rousseau's figure-system, and James Sully says that by it children can learn to sing at sight in a few weeks. It has gradually

For the moment he had to confess to himself that the whole thing was a fiasco—"once more my circulating fountain was broken; but this time I was thirty years old, a grown man, and found myself on the streets of Paris, where one does not live on nothing."

However he took it quietly; he had been under a dreadful strain as long as the affair lasted, and now he needed a breathing space. "Instead of giving myself up to despair, I abandoned myself calmly to laziness and the care of providence, and in order to give providence time to accomplish its work, I began to fritter away, without undue haste, the last few louis d'or left me, reducing my small incidental expenses without entirely giving them up. I went to the café only every other day, and to the theatre only twice a week." Besides, he kept very much to himself, gave up almost entirely association with the litterateurs and musicians whom he had got to know during his transactions with the Academy. He limited his visits to Fontenelle, who was always amiable toward him, and Marivaux, to whom he had shown his comedy, and who had agreeably expressed his satisfaction with it—indeed he had even undertaken to make certain corrections which, however, did not tend to improve it.

After his defeat in music, Rousseau seemed once more to have turned his attention to literature; every day he walked a long time in the Luxembourg gardens with Virgil and J. B. Rousseau in his pocket and tried to improve his bad memory by learning an ode or an eclogue by heart daily.

Otherwise he did nothing at all, but abandoned himself as usual to his dreams of greatness. For a time he thought that he had found a new way to fame; he went regularly every day to the Café de Maugis, where he met the greatest

spread itself over the whole of Europe, and the inventor's aim (to make the study of music easier and more general) has been attained; and even though his system is used only in the lower branches of the art and not entirely in the manner he intended, it is used to an extent that he never once hoped for. —(Albert Jansen : Rousseau als Musiker, 65.)

chess-players of Paris; of course he did not doubt but that he should soon surpass them all. The point was to be first in something; once first in chess-playing, he would soon be sought after, opportunities would present themselves, and his greatness would become revealed. But he never reached any further than to become a passably good chess-player.

Time passed and he was getting nearer and nearer the bottom of his purse, when one day Père Castel, who for a long time had watched him and been annoyed at his laziness, came to him and gave him a worldly-wise piece of advice. "Since the musicians and the learned men," he said to me, "will not dance to your music, you should change your key and address yourself to the women. Perhaps you will have greater success with them. I have spoken of you to Mme. de Besenval; go to her and give her my salutations. You will meet there her daughter, Mme. de Broglie, a very intellectual lady. Mme. Dupin is another to whom I have also spoken of you; take your book to her; she wants to see you and will receive you well. One accomplishes nothing in Paris except through women."

Jean Jacques shrank from doing this, and postponed it from day to day; but he finally gathered up his courage and went to Mme. de Besenval, who received him cordially, and her daughter, who also was present, had many pleasant things to say of his music-system and 'Dissertation.' Mme. de Besenval invited him to dinner, and he did not need a second asking; but when he understood from some casual remarks that dinner was being prepared for him in the kitchen, he felt deeply offended on his tenderest point, gave some sort of excuse, and wanted to leave. Fortunately Mme. de Broglie discovered the bitter disappointment in his face; she whispered a few words to her mother, the blunder was rectified, the invitation repeated, Jean Jacques forgot his excuse, and he soon sat at the elegant table with the two distinguished ladies and M. le President de Lamoignon, who had also come to take part in the little dinner. Both de Lamoignon and Mme. de Broglie were masters of Parisian

jargon, and their conversation consisted in little witticisms and fine insinuations; Jean Jacques was quite out of place and said not a single word. But after dinner he had his revenge. He took out his long rhymed letter to Parisot and delivered it before the little company with so much emotion that they all three burst into tears—they must have been very near the surface. Rousseau was soon to have tangible profit from this acquaintance, which, however, did not develop into any closer intimacy; on the other hand, his acquaintance with Mme. Dupin, whom he afterwards visited, had wide-reaching consequences.

Mme. Dupin was the daughter of the well-known financier, Samuel Bernard; her husband, who was much older than she, had got an enormous dowry with her and was besides a "fermier général" with a tremendous income. She was still one of the most beautiful women in Paris. She received Jean Jacques in her dressing-room in a careless peignoir, with bare arms and floating hair. This was quite proper in Paris in that day, but to Jean Jacques it was something new—it would have taken much less to put his blood afire; he became quite confused, and, of course, was immediately head over heels in love. Fortunately she did not notice his confusion, but quietly accepted the copy of 'Dissertation' which he presented to her, talking coolly and sensibly of its contents. He remained to dinner and was exceedingly proud and charmed at being placed next to her. She asked him to come and see her again; he accepted the invitation with great delight, misused it, went there almost every day and ate dinner there two or three times a week. He burned with a desire to lay his heart at her feet but did not dare; he understood that he must be careful; it meant not a little to him to have got admission to this house, and many chances might be lost if he should blunder. It was a brilliant company he met here. The house swarmed with dukes, ambassadors, *cordons bleus*. "La Princesse de Rohan, La Comtesse de Forcalquier, Mme. de Mirepoix, Mme. de Brignolé, Milady Hervey were her friends," writes Rous-

seau, and we feel how his lackey's heart is swelling with pride at the repetition of these names and at the thought that he had moved among them as an equal. And it was not only celebrities by birth but it was also the celebrities of the intellectual world that came to Mme. Dupin's salon; de Fontenelle, Abbé de St Pierre, Bernis, Buffon, Voltaire, all belonged to the circle. Rousseau had neither the courage nor the qualities to assert himself in these surroundings, and he did not dare to express his sentiments to his beloved hostess. Finally, however, he wrote to her. She kept the letter a few days without saying a word; the third day she gave it back to him with some encouraging words, but they were said in such a cold tone that Rousseau's blood chilled and his passion was extinguished.

At Mme. Dupin's he made the acquaintance of her stepson, Francueil, who was about her own and Rousseau's age, a cultivated man with many interests, musical and widely read. They became rather intimate, took a course in chemistry together under a professor, and Jean Jacques moved from his dismal street near the Sorbonne over to the Rue Verdelet, so as to be near his friend. But he became ill here with pleurisy, and for many days lay in delirium and dreamed of music. Just before his illness he had heard an opera of Royer, which, notwithstanding his inborn inclination "to overrate the talents of others and doubt his own," he nevertheless thought weak, so that he dared to say to himself in regard to several places: you could have done this much better yourself. In his delirium he began to write an opera of his own, composed verses, songs, duets, and choruses. "Oh! if one could only keep an account of one's fever-dreams," he writes, "what brilliant and sublime things one might sometimes see come from one's delirium." However, "*Les Muses gallantes*," his opera, was not completed at this time; there came an unexpected interruption. Though Jean Jacques had become more and more assiduous in his visits to Mme. Dupin, Mme. de Besenval and Mme. de Broglie had been active in his behalf. A M. de Montaigu had just been

appointed ambassador to Venice, and as he was not equipped with mental powers in any great superfluity, it was important that he should have an intelligent secretary. And his distinguished friends had selected Jean Jacques for the position ; there were some difficulties in the way, but they were finally overcome, and in the spring of 1743 he started off to enter upon a new career.

XIV.

DIPLOMAT IN VENICE.

ROUSSEAU fills many pages in 'Confessions' (seventh book) with the account of his activity as diplomat in Venice. He is not a little pleased with himself; he tells with pride, and in full detail, of the order he introduced into the office, of his official visits and dealings in the Doge's Palace, the adroitness he displayed in his association with the diplomats of other lands, the presence of mind with which he, time after time, upheld the interest and honour of France. At the same time he does not spare his chief, the imbecile ambassador, Count de Montaigu, who knew nothing and was absolutely incapable, but who was every moment on the point of ruining all Rousseau's plans by his stupidity.

Later investigators have corroborated his statements. They have dug in archives and brought forth the dispatches that were exchanged between the French Cabinet and the Venetian Embassy, and the result of these investigations is that Rousseau's account is found to be perfectly correct on all essential points, and quite consistent with the facts. However, he was guilty of several lesser inaccuracies. In telling of his trip to Venice, he complains that he did not have the opportunity of going to Chambéry to visit "la pauvre Maman," but we know that he really was in Chambéry. This can hardly be a fault of memory; probably some unpleasant circumstance was connected with this visit, which he therefore preferred to pass over in silence. Also the hint he lets fall in another place to the effect that it was

owing to the wisdom of "the poor despised Jean Jacques" that the house of Bourbon did not lose its Neapolitan kingdom, is undoubtedly founded on a very decided overestimation of his own significance; neither is it correct of him to represent that he resigned his position voluntarily; from a letter he wrote to du Theil we learn that it was his chief, the ambassador, who dismissed him, though it is true this was purely a matter of formality; in reality Rousseau purposely acted so that his resignation would be requested.

It is quite certain that Rousseau maintained his position in Venice brilliantly, and that both the pride and the bitterness in his account of this episode are fully justifiable. The ambassador's absolute incapability was of advantage to him; it gave him an opportunity to assert himself. The Count of Montaignu lacked every qualification for filling the position which had been entrusted to him; his appointment was solely owing to the patronage of influential friends; this was indeed the rule under Louis XV.'s reign, and was also the case with Rousseau, whose qualifications as diplomat could not possibly have been known beforehand. Even he was very anxious as to how he should acquit himself of a work which was quite new and foreign to him, but he had not been in the office many hours before he discovered that no supernatural powers were requisite. He found his helpless chief buried beneath piles of papers in cipher, which he was incapable of reading, although he had the key lying before him. Rousseau, who had never seen a cipher in his life, immediately made it out, and in a few days had deciphered the whole batch. He was soon absolutely at home in the affairs of the office, which were neither very important nor very complicated, and after that all the work was executed by him alone. The ambassador was content to do no more than make a correction now and then, which usually made it necessary for the secretary to write the whole thing over and try as well as he could to omit or cover up the ambassador's stupidities.

As a matter of fact, his position was rather subordinate;

he was not a secretary of legation appointed by the French government, but the ambassador's private secretary, and dependent on his will. But now that he did the work of a secretary of legation and more, he demanded respect and rank as such; he called himself always "Secrétaire d'ambassade," and conducted himself with considerable aplomb, was very testy in questions of etiquette, demanded and obtained precedence over the noble cavaliers attendant on the ambassador, on one occasion became highly indignant with his chief because the latter did not wish to invite him to a dinner he was to give to the Duke of Modena, and, on the whole, was extremely particular about his dignity on all occasions—a little more than necessary I think, as is often the case with men of a lower class when they rise to positions in which rank and precedence play such an important rôle. This excessive self-assertiveness doubtless irritated the ambassador, but there were other things that were still worse.

As Rousseau, little by little, became aware of his talents for diplomacy, he put his heart into his work more and more; he thought he had at last found his proper sphere. "It was high time," he writes proudly, "that I should become what heaven had intended me to be, and I now did so." He was fully determined to make a career for himself, and for a long time he had good reason to believe that he would succeed. His zeal and cleverness won appreciation, he was remarked and respected in diplomatic circles, and, as it was of no use to have dealings with the ambassador, people overlooked him entirely and applied directly to Rousseau. But this was more than the silly count could suffer, although he had at first been highly pleased with his clever secretary. He looked with increasing dissatisfaction upon this poor literary hack whom he had "rescued from dire distress," and who was about to rise above his master—the ingrate! He began to vex him, irritate him, mistreat him in every possible way, but Rousseau was not the man to suffer in silence; he was aware of his infinite superiority, and did not try at

all to hide it. Gradually the situation developed into open war. The most sordid stinginess and avarice were among the noble qualities of the high-born ambassador; Bernardin de Saint Pierre tells that Montaigne was in the habit of buying three boots, as he had discovered that three boots last just as long as two pairs;¹ he watched over the revenues of the office with the eye of an Argus, and did all he could to cut down the secretary's just perquisites; he did not pay him his salary, and on the whole made his life as unpleasant as possible by his suspicions, brutality, and stupidity. It was bound to end in a quarrel. In the autumn of 1744 Rousseau was dismissed. The ambassador continued his persecutions, kept back what he owed him, and tried to injure him in every way; Rousseau was popular in diplomatic circles, and was received in all quarters with a sympathy by no means flattering to his chief; it was not at all difficult for him to raise the money with which to get to Paris; but he remained a few weeks longer in Venice notwithstanding, partly to defy the ambassador, partly to make sure of the sympathy he should need when he should seek redress; he also wrote several long letters from Venice to the acting minister of foreign affairs, du Theil, explaining the situation and demanding his rights.

Thus ended Rousseau's diplomatic career, and all the great dreams (this time not unfounded) he had formed in connection with it. But even though he never became "*Ministre plénipotentiaire*," nevertheless this year in Venice in many ways exercised a profound influence on his development.

His greatest pleasure while in Venice was music; at that time there were a number of good theatres there, and tickets were distributed among all the ambassadors, so that the secretary of the legation had plenty of opportunities to cultivate his passion, and he seldom failed to make use of the advantage. The operatic performances were very long—five hours or more—the intermissions were interminable,

¹ Bern. de Saint Pierre, *Cœuvres* (ed. Ledentu, Paris, 1840), ii. 458.

and the theatre was used to a great extent as a meeting-place and as a place for social gatherings; even during the performances conversation and noise might continue until perhaps some very attractive aria from the stage would bring quiet over the house. Rousseau, for whom music was a matter of deep feeling, was indignant over this nuisance. He hid himself as well as he could in a corner of his box, and with great delight abandoned himself to the enjoyment of the beautiful songs. Italian music, which Scarlatti (1649-1725) had developed to a point of beauty and richness hitherto undreamed of, had by this time conquered the world; France was the only country that still opposed it, still maintaining the superiority of her own national music-drama. Rousseau, who, as we have heard, had made a thorough study of Rameau's theoretical works, was for a long time fettered by the learned and complicated technique of the French opera, but in Venice he became prepared for his awakening, and some years later he was to appear as the most famous and the most passionate champion of Italian music, whose possibilities of melodious song he was never tired of praising.

Rousseau found even more pleasure in the concerts given at the so-called "Schools" than at the opera. The "Schools" were institutions for poor young girls, and special attention was given to their training in music. Every Sunday, after service, anthem - concerts took place; there was a full orchestra, a large choir of quite young voices, and the anthems were composed and directed by the greatest musicians of Italy. "I cannot imagine anything more moving; at these lovely concerts the richness of the music, the beauty of the voices, the precision of the execution, create an impression that no human heart can withstand."

The whole of this year Rousseau revelled in music to his heart's content; wherever he went the air was full of harmony; the first time he ever heard a barcarole it was as if he had never heard music before. "Although the barcaroles," he writes later, "are composed for the people, often by the gondoliers themselves, nevertheless they are so full

of harmony that every musician in Italy is eager to learn them and to sing them. The gondoliers have free access to all theatres, so that they can easily train the ear and the taste, and they compose and sing with full knowledge of the fine points of music, yet without undertaking to change the naturalness and simplicity of their *barcaroles*."

A parallel influence to the rich musical inspiration he found in Venice was his increased interest in Italian literature. In his music-lexicon he tells that the gondoliers used to sing a large part of "*Jerusalem Delivered*,"—indeed some of them knew the whole of this poem by heart. Tasso had long been one of Rousseau's favourite poets, but his love for him increased in warmth when he heard every day how the verses of the unhappy poet had, carried on beautiful melodies, penetrated into the heart of the people. He, too, soon knew his Tasso by heart, and we later shall have an opportunity of seeing how verses of Tasso were constantly running from his pen quite involuntarily. In the same way he came to know Metastasio, who had written librettos to several of the operas he had heard, and who always obtained a warm spot in his heart.

But of still greater importance than the æsthetic advantages he received at this time is the political growth he underwent in his year as a diplomat. His intelligence was wide-awake in every quarter, and he applied himself with brilliant success to a study of the intellectual provinces that came within his view. He no longer wasted his time; even when, on the way to Venice, he was shut up quite by himself in an empty lazaretto in Genoa, where not a table nor a chair was to be found, he took out his little library and passed the time in reading, writing, and studying, using one of his trunks as a writing-desk, the other as a chair. In Venice the work required of him was not so strenuous but that he had several hours of the day to himself, and he mentions expressly that he used the time "in preparing for the profession upon which I had now entered." Political questions had already interested him at an earlier period; they had

not only appeared incidentally in the course of his philosophical and historical studies, but he had many years before absorbed himself in Grotius and Puffendorf.

He was aware of the fact that knowledge of the laws of society is a part of general culture, and he had therefore included this branch in his plan of education for young Mably. "It is befitting for a cultured and wise man to know the foundation on which society rests," he says in his schedule. But up to this time the politics he had studied had been the politics of books; as secretary of the legation he in many ways came in contact with active political life. The constant correspondence with the French and other governments had given him a glimpse of the mechanics of the machinery of government—its weaknesses and its strength; his association with diplomats made him familiar with the forms of international politics, and his wide-awake eye was fixed attentively on the tangles and intrigues of Venetian statecraft. The need that he felt to find his bearings in every quarter, and to form a well-founded opinion of his own in regard to what he saw about him, certainly helped him to establish his political studies on a broad basis. We can see from his later works that he had studied Machiavelli thoroughly, and he himself says that even when he was in Venice he had planned a great work, '*Institutions politiques*.' It is true nothing came of this work except fragments, but one of these fragments was '*Contrat Social*.'

In the meantime Rousseau's life in Venice was not entirely given up to work and studies or to music; during this year he took more part in social life than ever before or afterwards. We hear of him constantly, not only in the theatre, but at parties, balls, and masquerades; he seems to have enjoyed himself in this motley world, where he took his pleasure without too strict regard to the demands of virtue. Nor was he entirely a stranger in the half-world, and he dwells in '*Confessions*' with characteristic unconstraint on the charms of his demimondaine friends. I shall not follow him on this road, but there is a certain reference in

his confessions to this side of his life upon which Jules Lemaitre has commented, and which interests us because it reveals to us a spiritual condition or mood that presages a decided element of the romanticism of the nineteenth century.

It is his experience with the lovely Zulietta, whom he meets for the first time on board a ship with whose captain he had come into connection through diplomatic business. He arranged a meeting with her for the next day. "I entered a courtesan's room as if it were a temple of beauty and love; I seemed to see the very goddess of love in her person. I had never believed that without respect or reverence one could have such feelings as those she aroused in me." His blood throbs with all the violence of his passionate nature; but suddenly his mood changes, and "instead of the fire that consumed me, I feel a death-like chill freeze my veins; my legs tremble under me, and, about to swoon, I sit down and begin to weep like a child."

"Who could have guessed what was passing in my mind at this moment and the cause of my tears? I said to myself: 'This creature whom I have in my power is a masterpiece of nature and love; her spirit and her body both are perfect; she is as good and noble as she is amiable and beautiful. The great men of the world and princes ought to be her slaves; sceptres should lie at her feet. And yet she is nothing more than a poor street-girl at the mercy of every man. She is at the disposal of a ship's captain at one moment, now she throws herself into my arms, and she knows that I have no money. . . .'"

These words are not only a new evidence of the unsound in Rousseau's erotic life, but also for the first time touch a string in European literature on which many and varied tunes were to be played in the following century. The fulsome sympathy for the prostitute, who is more to be pitied as the victim of society than to be blamed for her own sinfulness, became, as is well known, the favourite theme of hundreds of poems, stories, and dramas, from

every part of the world in the nineteenth century. But when 'Confessions' was published this feeling was so new and seemed so preposterous and absurd that the well-known critic La Harpe found one of the weightiest proofs of Rousseau's lunacy in these words about Zulietta.¹

Rousseau's stay in Venice was in many ways significant for him; there are marks of it in his moral, political, musical, and literary development; and we shall have the opportunity later to make a more detailed examination of the results he took with him. But more important than anything the Italian opera, the great poets, or the diplomatic world could teach him, was his own experience with the Count of Montaigu, and the bitterness that was thereby engrained in his soul.

He was wounded in his very depths—in his sense of justice and in his ambition. He had done his duty and more; he had done good work which had been acknowledged; indeed, he had even performed great services for France; but what thanks had he got? A brutal chief had mistreated him without interference, and had finally driven him out of the house. Once more he stood destitute, his future ruined; but he had nothing with which to reproach himself; on the contrary, all honest people were on his side—all had the same opinion of the ambassador's manifest injustice,—the French consul in Venice, the foreign diplomats, even the government in Paris—but of what avail was it? The secretary was in the right, but the ambassador gained the day. This is the way of the world.

The letters which Rousseau sent to the acting Minister, du Theil, at the close of 1744, in which he gives an account of his differences with De Montaigu, are all composed with the greatest self-possession; every word is well weighed, and the tone is throughout stamped by the most unimpeachable official respect; but under all this correctness there surges a deep rebelliousness over the treatment to which he had been subjected, and here and there his bitterness appears in short

¹ Cf. Jules Lemaitre, *J. J. Rousseau*, p. 43 ff.

but violent outbreaks. "I know, Mr Secretary," he writes, the 8th of August, "how many prejudices I have against me, I know that in every quarrel between master and servant it is always the latter who is wrong," but yet he cannot give up his right and he will fight for it to his last breath. The government undoubtedly agreed with him in his opinion of de Montaigu, but nothing was done to give him redress; the fact was that he was not a servant of the state, but the ambassador's private secretary, and the affair was left for them to conclude between themselves. Jean Jacques did not obtain as much as a reply to his four long letters to du Theil.¹

Nor did he have any better success in his further efforts to obtain redress; when he returned to Paris he met much sympathy—most people he met acknowledged that he had been shamefully mistreated and that the ambassador was a shabby creature unworthy of defence. But "he was ambassador and I was only his secretary. The social order, or whatever it is called, was not willing that I should have justice, and so I did not get it. They let me talk, even encouraged me in chorus, but the affair remained on the same footing until I tired of always having justice on my side, but never getting justice, lost patience and gave the whole thing up."

What annoyed him most was that some of those that stood nearest to him did not show him the passive sympathy he usually received from other quarters. Père Castel, who, before his departure, had been so faithful to him and had given him such wise advice, now met him with noticeable coolness; he was prompt enough with beautiful phrases, but through all his Jesuitical talk "I saw that he faithfully followed one of the chief maxims of the day, which was that one must sacrifice the weak to the mighty. The strong feelings I had in regard to the justice of my cause and my natural pride did not permit me to submit patiently to this partiality, and I therefore ceased to have any further intercourse with him."

¹ See Œuvres, x. pp. 43-48.

It was still worse with Mme. de Besenval; she had been the real instrument in securing him the position under de Montaigu, and it seemed therefore as though she should be the first one to use her great influence in Rousseau's favour. But in this he was deeply disappointed; "she was filled with the idea of the rights of rank and nobility, and could never get into her head that an ambassador could be wrong and a secretary right—and the reception she gave me was consistent with this prejudice." Rousseau left her house deeply offended, went straight home and wrote her a bitter letter, which certainly is the truest expression of his feelings at this time:—

"I was wrong, Madam, I was mistaken. I thought you were just; you belong to the nobility, I should have remembered that, I should have understood that it is unbecoming of me, a foreigner and plebeian to come with complaints against a nobleman. Have I ancestors? Have I titles? Is justice without a title of nobility justice at all? I had seen you gentle and tender; I was excited by the most justifiable anger; I did not have the tact to see that the case was a privileged one. It is the last time I shall be guilty of such disrespect, Madam. If Fate ever again brings me in the clutches of an ambassador of the same type, I shall suffer without complaint. If he is without dignity, without nobility of soul, I shall remember that his title exempts him; if he seeks the lowest society in the most immoral town, I shall remember that his forefathers had enough honour for him; if he associates with scoundrels, even if he himself is a scoundrel, if he cheats his servant of his honestly earned wages—ah, Madam, I shall only envy in silence his luck in not being the child of his own acts. And these forefathers of whom one boasts so highly, who were they? They were men without position, without fortune, my equals; they made names for themselves; but nature, who fills life with the good and the bad, has given them wretched descendants, who are not capable of appreciating those who are the equals of their forefathers."

The emotion which trembles in these words was the most heartfelt impression that Venice left on Rousseau; the injured pride, the sense of injustice that he had suffered, were more decisive in shaping his view of life than all the musical, literary, and political influences he had got. It was not that he had formerly been blind to the injustice and absurd valuation of society; he had even, as we have seen, given this feeling mild literary expression; but a personal experience is quite a different affair, especially for a man with such a clamouring ego as Rousseau.

"The fruitlessness of my just complaints," he writes in 'Confessions,' "left in my soul a feeling of indignation against our foolish social order which always sacrifices the true welfare of the state and real justice to a so-called 'system,' but which in reality destroys all system and only gives the sanction of public authority to the oppression of the weak and the unfairness of the strong."

However, five long years were to pass before this indignation should find its world-renowned outlet. Rousseau himself gives two reasons why so long a time went by before he struck the blow; one was that, at that time, he had formed some intimate friendships, notably with the noble Spaniard Altuna, which helped to quiet and soften his anger; but chiefly it was because the matter at stake was too personal and private, he thinks; it was "because it concerned me myself and because private interest which has never produced anything great and noble was not capable of uplifting my heart to the point of divine enthusiasm which it is given only to the purest love of justice and beauty to produce."

It is not so certain that this explanation is the correct one; that Rousseau with full consciousness should have postponed his attack on society until his personal rancour had cooled is hardly probable. His impressions always lay a long time in his memory before they were productive, and it is quite consistent with his nature, such as we have learned to know it from earlier indications, that this should be the case here too. In 1750, when he sent forth his first flaming

manifesto against the abominations of polite society, his bitter experience in Venice still lay smouldering in his heart and helped to give his style its violent passionateness; but the "germe d'indignation" which, according to his own account, was planted in his soul in 1744 had grown mighty in the course of the years and had expanded itself into a resentful protest against the revolting preposterousness of the entire social civilisation. And many other things joined themselves to it—old experiences appeared in a new light, new experiences gave deeper root to his convictions, multitudinous thoughts from his reading little by little became a part of his own conceptions.

After his diplomatic discomfiture he came back to Paris, quite destitute, in the end of 1744, and then he settled down there for a time; but the community he lived in became more and more repulsive to him, until one day he declared war.

But before we begin to describe this war let us take a look at the enemy. One cannot obtain a full understanding of Rousseau's lifework without knowing something of the France of Louis XV.

XV.

PARIS UNDER LOUIS XV.

WHEN Rousseau, following Père Castel's advice, turned to women to secure directions on the road to fortune, from which the Academy had cut him off, he received not only material help and support from his high-born protectresses, as we have seen, but more, as they also gave their inexperienced friend much good advice on the way. "In order to direct my inexperience," he tells ('Confessions,' vii.), "she (Mme. de Broglie) gave me 'Les Confessions du Comte de ——.' This book, she said to me, is a mentor of which you will have need in 'society.' It will be of advantage to you to consult it now and then. . . ."

Let us look a moment to see what kind of a mentor the duchess thought fitting to recommend to this social neophyte. 'Les Confessions du Comte de ——' is a youthful work of Duclos,¹ a novel in two parts, of which the whole of the first and the greater part of the second are concerned exclusively with amorous intrigues. Comte de —— had had a rich experience with women; women were not only the central point in his life, they were the entire content. He began as early as possible—as soon as the physical conditions were present—and did not stop until they were satiated. On the first hundred pages of the book he has no less than twenty mistresses, an average of one to every five pages; he sees them, seeks their acquaintance, ensnares them and abandons them—though in case of need he may occasionally keep one

¹ Duclos, *Œuvres* (Paris, 1806), viii. 1-191.

as a reserve fund. Good form forbids his being without trumps for fourteen days at a time. His gallery is well supplied and of great variety, from many countries and classes of society; there is an Italian countess who reveals to him a fervour unknown in cooler climates; a Spanish princess who goes into a cloister for his sake; an English lady who shoots herself when he abandons her; and at home, in France, he operates everywhere with the same irresistible certainty; conquers, by methods modified to suit every taste, the daughters of the highest aristocracy, of the official nobility, of the great financiers and of "la bourgeoisie," and, in between times, amuses himself with the professional courtesans. The only moral consideration the young count observes is that he limits his hunting field to married ladies. "Mme. de Sezanne (this was number eight) was young, beautiful, well-formed and newly married, and seemed worthy of my homage. . . . Fortunately she was free and without any ties, for I have never counted a husband as anything."

Finally—in the last part of the story—he meets a woman, Mme. de Selve, for whom love is something more than a game and a temporary intoxication of the senses. She loves him so much that she cannot bear to share him with others, and at first he is attracted by the novelty of possessing the self-sacrificing affection of an intellectual woman; society life loses every charm for him; to the consternation of his worldly friends he withdraws absolutely from social life, and disappears from "le monde." He abandons himself to his new happiness, but it does not last long—he soon begins to find the monotonous life without diversions a bore. He makes his way back to the salons, becomes once more the object of the cross-fire of kindling eyes; he cannot resist the spell, and is again caught in the whirl. But his experience with Mme. de Selve was not to be forgotten; he is not capable of loving her as she demands, but the memory of her love has made worldly gallantries empty and unbearable; finally they become absolutely repulsive to him, and so he escapes to the country, and there

in rustic exile the young man of the world relives the spicy memories of his youth with obvious pleasure; it seems far off to him although he has not yet completed his fortieth year.

The latter part of the novel, it is true, is dedicated to the moral edification the author intended to convey, but it was certainly not that part of the book of which the Duchess of Broglie was thinking when she gave it to Rousseau as a guide to the life upon which he was about to enter. This appears distinctly in the words in which Rousseau mentions the gift in 'Confessions.' "For more than twenty years," he says, "I preserved this book in gratitude to her from whom it came, but I sometimes had to laugh at the opinion she must have had as to my '*mérite galant*.'" Even though Rousseau may not have used this charming mentor in the manner in which the duchess meant him to, nevertheless these confessions probably opened his eyes to certain sides of life in that world where he was to pass the most decisive years of his existence. At any rate, it is very characteristic of the times that it should occur to a distinguished lady of culture to give the new arrival such a book as this in order to help him to overcome a naïveté which she considered a hindrance to his progress in the world.

Count ——'s 'Confessions' certainly contains no exaggerations; if one glances through the memoirs¹ of the day,

¹ Of the voluminous contemporary literature (memoirs, letters, observations, &c.), which gives information in regard to the customs of the eighteenth century in France, I have drawn on Duclos' works with the greatest confidence, because they seem to me to be marked by thoroughgoing impartiality and sobriety. Mme. d'Epinay's memoirs are, partly at least, more a contemporary historical novel than reliable memoirs, besides being falsified on important points, as Mrs Macdonald has proved. The Duke of Luynes writes from the standpoint of a faithful courtier, Barbier as a narrow-minded bourgeois, Grimm as an impassioned member of a literary clique, &c. Naturally these and other authors of memoirs give valuable and invaluable contributions to one's knowledge of the physiognomy of the time; but most of them look at their day from a certain view-point, and their writings can only be used under keen critical control, which at least lessens their direct worth as sources of information. It is different with Duclos; a bourgeois, he went to Paris when very young, became soon a member and life-secretary of the

one finds the impression received from these confessions corroborated on every page. Thousands of erotic scandals fill these volumes; scandals, reported without indignation or even disapproval, commented on gaily and then dismissed.

Court life under the latter part of Louis XIV.'s reign had been painfully tedious; the elderly Mme. de Maintenon's piety had bound the forms of social life under a rigid bombastic style, which made it necessary for every courtier who wished to advance to assume Tartuffe's mask.

It seemed therefore as if a dam had burst when finally in 1715, the Sun-King was borne to his grave, accompanied by the hatred of an entire people, and with the most scandalous demonstrations, which have often been described. However the Duke of Orléans, who, for the following eight years during Louis XV.'s minority was the chief of state, did not have a drop of Tartuffe's blood in his veins. According to contemporary reports he had good abilities, was not without wit, was amiable and pliable, but seems to have suffered from moral insanity. For him the Treasury was nothing more than a means of satisfying his and his attendants' insatiable appetites; every evening when the tiresome business of state had been reeled off, he shut himself up in his apartment with his *roués*, an extremely mixed

Academy, obtained access to the most widely differing circles, without being bound to any clique or metier which might have influenced his opinion. Duclos was not an original genius; he had neither Voltaire's wit, Diderot's surprising richness of fancy, Rousseau's fire, nor Buffon's all-embracing vision. But he was an intelligent man, observant and logical, and, on the whole, must be said to have been independent. His lack of imagination helps to make his novels reliable sources to which one can turn—hardly anything in them is his own except the names. (Besides *Les Confessions du Comte de —* and another novel of similar calibre, *Mémoires sur les mœurs de ce siècle*, the works of Duclos here referred to are: *Mémoires secrets sur Louis XV.*, *Mémoires secrets sur la régence*, and (his best work) *Considérations sur les mœurs de ce siècle*, and the autobiographical fragment which unfortunately was interrupted.)

In addition to these contemporary memoirs I have consulted: Victor du Bled's *La société française du XVI^{me} au XX^{me} siècle*; Emile Colombey's *Ruelles, Salons, et Cabarets*; Marius Roustan's excellent work, *Les philosophes et la société française au XVIII^{me} siècle* (Paris, 1906).

company of highest extraction, and abandoned himself to the wildest orgies. His daughter, the Duchess of Berry, concerning whose relations with her father there were the most hideous rumours afloat, carried on her scandalous life in supercilious contempt for the simplest demands of even a superficial propriety. As the mental powers of the Regent decayed under his uninterrupted dissipations, he became more and more a tool in the hands of his conscienceless minister, Abbé Dubois. Dubois was a wise and intriguing parvenu, who shrank from absolutely nothing that might be a means of satisfying his insatiable ambition and lust for power; and he finally did become an all-powerful minister with a royal income, of which King George gave him forty thousand pounds a-year for leading French politics to England's advantage; he even succeeded by the help of the Regent in being appointed to the highest ecclesiastical office under the Pope,¹ notwithstanding his manifestly vicious life.

As the Regent, notwithstanding the oppressive taxes he levied on the nation, was not able to satisfy all the demands made on him by the unsystematic state economics, and by the shameless greediness of the Court nobility, he seized with cupidity any sort of means of overcoming his difficulties. The famous and infamous financier, John Law, a grand swindler of fantastic dimensions, had, in the last year of Louis XIV.'s reign, got permission—after much opposition—to establish a private bank founded on the most reckless and untenable principles in regard to the nature of credit. At first all went well, the shares flourished, and the bank-notes were much sought after; the Regent, dazzled by its success, sought a connection with Law,—his private bank was turned into a national

¹ Abbé Tencin became a cardinal, too, although he had been publicly proven guilty of perjury. With such evidences as these, one must say that Duclos' sentence in 'Considérations' on the clergy is an extremely mild one: "La contagion de la société . . . a percé dans un ordre uniquement destiné à l'édification et pour lequel les qualités aimables de nos jours auraient été jadis pour le moins indécentes."

bank; he himself went over to Catholicism, was appointed general controller of the finances of the kingdom, and now his fantasy had unlimited sway. He issued bank-notes in enormous quantities—the last ones, payable to the amount of three and a half milliard francs, considerably more than France's whole fortune at the time. This paper flood spread devastatingly over Paris, which immediately became transformed into a gambling-house. By every known artifice in the world John Law tried to put his imaginary wealth into circulation; he established a gigantic commercial company, set on foot a tremendous colonisation movement, with the help of the military forced hundreds of Frenchmen to emigrate to the region of the Mississippi, whence enormous wealth was to stream back to the home-country. Stock-exchange gambling, which before had been practically unknown in France, became the chief passion of the Parisians; fortunes were made in a day and squandered in unheard-of luxury; all classes were in the clutches of the swindle; the oldest and noblest names of France besmirched their escutcheons with the most sordid transactions; it was an orgy of speculation to which the world has never seen a parallel.

A couple of years went by and then the uncertainty began; the great speculators were the first to suspect, and they went to the bank with their masses of papers, got them redeemed, and went home with their millions. But the restlessness spread to a panic, the bank was stormed, could not pay, and in spite of the rigorous and ridiculous laws with which they tried to subdue the storm, the whole thing ended in a scandalous bankruptcy; shares representing a value of twenty thousand francs were sold for twenty, and the bank-notes were not worth more than the paper they were printed on.

This period with its dazzling adventures in speculation and ensuing enormous crash, brought on the nation not only a perceptible economic shock from which it took a long time to recover, but it also left deep marks on French customs,

in that it gave a new and unexpected impetus to that social movement which tended to make money the most important, and after a little, the only instrument of power in human intercourse. "Everything, even the language," says Baudrillart,¹ "gives evidence of this revolution which was caused by wealth, and which expresses itself in greed for money. In the seventeenth century 'to speculate' meant to lose one's self in metaphysical problems; in the eighteenth, it means to gamble on the exchange in papers rising or falling in value. Formerly one spoke of Descartes' system, now one speaks of Law's system; and the words are only an expression of this displacement in thought. Formerly man's imagination looked upward, now it looks only about or often down."

While the Regent and his numerous and only too willing retinue abandoned themselves to economic and other orgies, the little prince was growing up as the nation's hope, encompassed by the tenderest love. Notwithstanding the contempt and bitter hatred toward the king's person which in Louis XIV.'s last years had risen and constantly increased in violence, the royal power itself, strangely enough, had not been affected by such feelings; it was a part of the people's religion; patriotism and royalism were identical conceptions; one might despise a certain king, but the feeling for the royal house remained just as firm as it had done for centuries. These feelings were shared by all classes of people, from the nobility of the Court, whose existence depended on the continuance of the monarchy, down to the poor peasants who had the burdensome honour of paying for the feast. Even the philosophers, who otherwise sent their darts in so many directions, still did not think of aiming at the monarchy. "It is quite natural to love a house that has reigned for eight hundred years," says Voltaire; and he hereby expressed what the whole of his sect meant; if one looks up the word "roi" in the great encyclopedia, one will find a warm defence of enlightened

¹ *Histoire du luxe*, iii.

despotism; even d'Argenson, who had so many radical political dreams, never thought of trying to realise them without the help of the monarchy, and the physiocrats looked to the king as the rescuing angel who was the one person capable of carrying out their system, the only one that would bring salvation. Montesquieu found among the philosophers almost no one to agree with him in his defence of a limited and constitutional monarchy.

It is almost pathetic to read, in the letters and memoirs of the day, of the bright hopes with which all looked toward the little king; when he became ill in 1721—he was then eleven years old,—it seems as if the entire French nation lived in feverish excitement and anxiety for his life; their thoughts turned threateningly towards the Regent and his minister, in suspicion of their criminal designs,—a quite unfounded suspicion however; not that both of them were not capable of almost anything, but that it would have militated against their own interests to have the little king out of the way.

When he finally did recover, the nation felt as though an imminent danger had been removed. There was no end to their rejoicing, one brilliant feast after another proclaimed their joy over their fatherland's having been saved. Their cries of exultation reverberated from land's end to land's end.

There has hardly ever in any land been a king more deeply loved by his people than Louis XV. His appearance was fine, stately, and distinguished; his behaviour was beyond criticism; he was personally brave, or at least not a coward; he was not without wit, at least he could now and then find a happy phrase, which always passed from mouth to mouth and made his popularity deep-rooted. Louis XIV. at his height had been a great king, but Louis XV. was the greatly loved king. "Le bien aimé" was the name he went under; under it he was praised, sung, worshipped; numerous towns sent requests to the government to be given statues of "le bien aimé"; if they could not have him personally in their midst, they would have his picture.

If there had been anything at all in him he could have worked wonders.

The illusions of the people in regard to him lasted a long time. They longed impatiently for the old Cardinal Fleury to resign from his all-powerful position, so that the well-beloved might advance in all his glory, and when the wise old statesman died in 1743 their joy was tremendous. The next year the king took part in the war, and when he became seriously ill at Metz it caused a national sorrow just as deep-felt and general as in 1721. Even as late as 1748, when he came home to Aix-la-Chapelle after peace was made, he stood in the nation's consciousness as a god who combined in his person warlike heroism with a noble love of peace. But this was the point of culmination; he now began to reveal more and more his true nature, and the disappointment became just so much deeper in proportion as the expectation had been dazzling. The last twenty-five years of his reign mark an uninterrupted decline at an increasing rate; it is true he was still celebrated in song, but the songs of praise had changed to lampoons, and the admiration and love of the people to the diametrically opposite sentiment of contempt and detestation.

Those who stood near to the king had for a long time looked upon him with doubtful eyes; he was good and harmless, and did what he was told; but he was strangely slack and indifferent in all things, and so indolent that it was difficult to find anything between heaven and earth to make an impression on him. He seems even to have been quite oblivious to feminine charms; at fifteen he had been married to Maria Leczinska, the daughter of the King of Poland, and many years went by before his eye discovered other women: eight daughters and two sons she presented to him. According to the ideas of the day such constancy was almost perversity, and the Court did what it could to rescue its king from ridicule,—for a long time in vain; Louis always returned to his Maria. "I find none more beautiful than she," said he. At last they thought that they discovered signs that

the dull and heavy queen was beginning to bore the king, and they hoped that his stubborn faithfulness would soon end. The question now was to find the right favourite, one who would content herself with the amusement department and not interfere in politics. The question was important, and many fathers and husbands of the noblest blood went about with more or less secret hopes. The choice fell upon Mme. de Mailly (born Mlle. de Nesles), and in the memoirs of the time there are many piquant stories as to how this highborn lady, after many fruitless attacks, at last succeeded in triumphing over the virtue of this most unaggressive king.

Thus Louis XV. got his first official mistress. One hears nothing of scandalised morals; on the contrary, not only the Court which had appointed her was delighted, but in all classes of society Mme. de Mailly's elevation was celebrated as a joyful event; lyrics written for the occasion abounded, the royal father-confessor had a serious conversation with Maria Leczinska, and convinced her of the necessity of the proposed step; even the bourgeois Barbier was annoyed that any one could wonder over such a natural thing. "It is too ridiculous," he writes ('Journal,' iv. 496), "to demand that the king, who is the master, should be worse off [*soit de pire condition*] than his subjects and all his royal predecessors."

When Louis first got a taste of variety, things took a rapid turn; he soon became tired of Mme. de Mailly, who was not very young, and instead took her younger sister, Mme. de Vintimille, who had just been married. However, she died soon after in child-birth,—it was said that she had been poisoned,—and the king mourned for a few weeks, but then took Mme. de Mailly into favour once more, although a short time afterwards he forced her to submit to having another young sister, Mme. de Lauraguais, to share her honour. So it was that the supply of royal mistresses was for a time a desired and envied monopoly for the noble family de Nesles—and there were still two more sisters; one of them, however, he did not get, though, if one can believe contemporary

accounts, this was by no means her fault; but her husband, Marquis de Flavacourt, was a grim gentleman, who would not submit to a partnership, even if it were with Jupiter, and he threatened to kill his wife if she should dare to follow the family tradition. On the other hand, there were no hindrances in the way of the youngest, the Marquise de la Tournelle (later the Duchess of Châteauroux)—not even from the Marquis himself. She seems to have had more in her than her sisters, would not share her honours with another, demanded a more official position, and hoped to exercise political influence. The moment was favourable for her advancement; Fleury had just died, and it was hoped that the new mistress would encourage the king to take the rudder of state into his own hands. And she really succeeded in doing what his masculine advisers had failed in,—in shaking him out of his slackness and in persuading him to assume command of his army. He started off, and there was great rejoicing among the people; his mistress shared the honour in the general opinion, and for a time was praised under the name of the new Agnes Sorel. But she was soon to become a victim of the caprices of the popular mood; when she went to visit the king in camp, the soldiers began to sing disrespectful verses to the effect that she had nothing to do on the battlefield, she might just as well go home; and when she came to Metz during his illness, the army chaplain refused to administer Holy Communion to the sick king as long as his mistress was there. Her return trip was an ignominious retreat; her carriage forced its way through howling crowds, who hissed her, scoffed her, and insulted her in the most disgraceful way. It is true she had her revenge when the king recovered and came home, but she did not long enjoy the pleasure of it; she died before the year was out (1744),—this time also there was a rumour of poisoning.

And so the situation was once more vacant; the de Nesles family was depleted, competition was open, and there were many who had well-founded hopes; complicated intrigues were spun, the female pretendants blossomed forth in all

the charms they possessed, parents, brothers, and husbands exercised more or less discreetly all the influence they commanded; one hears of the most distinguished names in France in this connection,—Mme. de Forcalquier, Countess Lamark, the Princess of Rohan, the Princess of Robecq, &c.,—the latter especially seemed to have good chances, a daughter of the house of Montmorency, and supported by her mighty father, the Marshal of Luxembourg! Excitement mounted high as the great New Year's ball at the Hôtel de Ville approached, where the final decision was to be made. All that Paris possessed of distinguished female beauty was present; there were whispers of breathless expectation, hundreds of brilliant eyes followed the king's every movement. At last he threw the handkerchief—that was the sign. To whom? People could not believe their own eyes—to Mme. d'Etioles, born Poisson! A tradesman's daughter! This was a revolution, a breach of the world-system, it could not be serious, it must be only a passing fancy, a Poisson could not become the king's official mistress, such an encroachment on the rights of the nobility was inconceivable!¹

However, it proved that the king was this time to go his own way obstinately. Mme. d'Etioles was soon elevated to the title of Marquise de Pompadour, became the only historical personage of all Louis XV.'s mistresses, and for almost twenty years—long after she had ceased to be the king's mistress—continued to exercise a powerful influence on both the home and the foreign policy. The Court never forgave “la favorite roturière” her humble origin; they traduced and slandered her in every possible way; the memoirists faithfully wrote down all the scandal, and handed down to history the dreadful picture of her which we all know from our school books. It is only lately that conscientious historians, by applying the methods of modern criticism, and by the

¹ “Si le fait était vrai,” writes the Comte de Luynes, “ce ne serait vraisemblablement qu'une galanterie et non pas une maîtresse.”—‘Memoirs,’ v., mars 1745, p. 354.

help of hitherto unknown documents, have revised the popular judgment passed upon Mme. de Pompadour, and in many respects the revision has been in her favour.¹

Mlle. Poisson had received an excellent education, and in information and culture towered high above most of her noble rivals; she had often been a guest in Mme. Geoffrin's *salon*, where she had met the most brilliant people of the land, and had become familiar with the most daring thoughts; she was unprejudiced and high-minded enough not to deny her humble origin; her letters to her family speak most advantageously for her character. It is true these later and more just historians have not been able to erase the register of her sins, but even her errors, on closer view, become lessened by extenuating circumstances. She was certainly a very expensive lady for France, but we must remember that contemporary chronicles have given the most unreasonable and most exaggerated accounts of the maniacal luxury in which she lived, and we must allow it to her credit that her lavishness was applied not so much toward enriching herself as to great artistic ends; the architecture, as well as the art of painting in the eighteenth century, was greatly indebted to Mme. de Pompadour. Her interference in the foreign policy and in war-tactics was, on several occasions, disastrous for her country, but modern historians think that this was due not so much to the stupidity of her political ideas as to bad luck and the incapacity of the commanders of the army. In spite of all difficulties she maintained her position at Court with dignity. She did not forget her humble origin, and directed—both from policy and from sympathy—what we, with a slightly anachronistic expression, may term the liberal tendencies of the day. She loved literature, and writers found a powerful friend in her; she did not forget what she had learned from the philosophers in Mme. Geoffrin's *salon*, and she gave them her support on all occasions, endowed them with handsome pensions, helped

¹ See especially Pierre de Nolhac, 'Louis XV. et Madame de Pompadour.' Paris, 1907.

them to get into the Academy, protected them against their enemies, and invited many of them to her *salons*. They understood, too, what a support they had in her, and they for the most part have given a favourable opinion of her. It is true that Voltaire sprinkled some of his gall on her in 'La Pucelle,' but on other occasions he praised her in verse and prose, and when she died he wrote a letter to Damilaville, in which he expressed his deep regret at the loss that philosophy had suffered in her death. Later writers have often reproached the philosophers for their relations with Mme. de Pompadour; they consider it one of the most striking proofs of the corruption of the day that they, who called themselves the defenders of truth and virtue, should have allowed themselves to be protected and pensioned by the mistress of a king. And, of course, this pension-system is not very commendable, nor does it tend to elevate the dignity of literature and its authors; but even in the eighteenth century it was difficult to live by one's pen: it is true Lesage did so, but only by writing at such a rate that the quality of his work suffered; otherwise, as far as I know, there was not a single one of them (with the exception of Rousseau, of whom we shall hear later) that did not receive benefices from one quarter or another. And as to thinking that it is any more compromising to receive money from a royal mistress than from any one else—we must be careful not to apply the moral standards of our day to these conditions. The royal mistress was a perfectly official and legitimate personage, her position was socially acknowledged, she received and was received by the most distinguished ladies and gentlemen: even the Pope spoke of her with the greatest admiration and courted her influence. Under these circumstances, it may be remarked that if an author was willing at all to accept a pension, it was less humiliating to accept it from Mme. de Pompadour, who in a way was a power of state, than to put himself under obligations to private benefactresses. Besides, to a certain extent, the Marquise was a fellow-partisan of the philosophers. Her

liberal education, her almost revolutionary position as low-born royal mistress, made her turn almost involuntarily to the philosophers, who were on the point of becoming a power, in order to find a counterbalance to the enmity that never ceased to buzz about her at Court. This was quite consistent with her personal opinions. Mme. de Pompadour had thought a great deal, and from her letters we learn to know her as a woman who had liberal—though not radical—opinions on religious and ecclesiastical questions; she took sides against the clerical ideas of the day, not only from policy but from conviction, and played a most important part in the expulsion of the Jesuits. We see that she herself was something of a philosopher; she got a testimonial to this effect from no less a personage than Voltaire.

When the Marquise died in 1764 and the situation thus became vacant, the excitement was perhaps still greater than it was twenty years before at the death of Mme. de Châteauroux. Then (1745) the king was not more than thirty-five years old, and was still the object of the nation's brightest hopes; now every hope so far as he was concerned had been extinguished. No one believed any longer that he was capable of anything,—a senile, unresisting tool in the hands of those that surrounded him; therefore the choice of the one who was to seize the sceptre which the king's withered hands were not able to hold, was all the more important. It is plain that the clerical Court party must have begun to hope. However, several years went by before the king made a decision; there was a series—if we are to believe the memoirs, a long series—of quite transient connections, which had no influence on public life, and in the meantime the able minister, Choiseul, continued the liberal policy that had been practised under his leadership in the days of the “philosophical” Pompadour. In 1769 the old king began to cast his glances on Jeanne Bécu, an illegitimate daughter of the somewhat notorious Anne Bécu. She became the official mistress, and soon after was given the title

of Comtesse du Barry—there was once more in France a power behind the throne.

Du Barry was made of quite other stuff than Pompadour—a born courtesan of a rather vulgar type, without intelligence or culture or thoughts, but beautiful and physically alluring, and in possession of a reckless *gaminerie* that pleased the *blasé* old king. Her language was that of a market-woman and her tastes extremely low. When the chief of police read his regular reports on the dregs of Parisian life, du Barry was always present, and if there was anything particularly choice read, she would shout with laughter, slapping her hips in glee. Her past was rich in experiences of cheap gallantry, and she treated the King of France just as a street-wench treats her lover—with a reckless good nature which took not the least account of his Majesty's dignity.

Of course such a dame had no political ambition, and it is certainly incorrect of certain memoir-writers to accuse her of complicated intrigues. For her "elevation" only meant an opportunity for unlimited satisfaction of her mania for pleasure and luxury. But this only gave the Court party all the more hope of being able to use her. The high-born ladies, princesses of the blood, duchesses and countesses, who had been so indignant over Pompadour, received du Barry with the greatest cordiality, kissed her on both cheeks, and treated her like a sister. Of course they maliciously enjoyed her strange manners and her surprising flowers of speech, but they never forgot what a valuable tool of power they had in her. Du Barry was by no means insensible to all this aristocratic and royal amiability, and she did what was demanded of her. One day when she had dismissed a cook who resembled Choiseul, she said to the king, "Now I have driven away my Choiseul, when will you drive yours away?" And Choiseul was dismissed. She carried out the wishes of the reactionary Court party, and by the irony of a bitter fate the rule of this royal harlot came to designate the triumph of clericalism. As is well known, Parliament suffered the most

under this, but the encyclopedists also lived to acknowledge the truth of Voltaire's words that in Pompadour's death philosophy had suffered a great loss.

We read in 'Lettres Persanes':¹ "The French king is a great wizard, he rules over the minds of his subjects also; he makes them think exactly as he wants them to." This utterance of Montesquieu is dated 1712, but notwithstanding it may be applied in many respects to Louis XV. The king and his courtiers dictated "good form," and were the moral models after which the nation—from highest to lowest—tried to mould their lives. "Out of twenty courtiers fifteen do not live with their wives, but have mistresses; indeed, even among private men, nothing is more common in Paris." Thus writes Barbier in 1750, and it is not his habit to exaggerate.

The immigration of the nobility to Paris, which was in full swing under Louis XIV., continued with increasing rapidity throughout the eighteenth century; the country aristocracy gradually lost all social prestige and political influence; the country was full of abandoned chateaux; all those who could possibly get away packed up and went to Paris; those that had to remain sank into provincial insignificance, pluming themselves on their privileges, but greatly despised by the peasants, to whose level of culture many of them very soon sank. There were very few exceptions—one or two proud seigneurs, like those of the family of Mirabeau, in spite of the new fashions, maintained their family traditions stubbornly. These only proved the rule.

At Court we hear of the proudest names in France, men who are seeking to repair their fortunes, who bow and bend, who court pensions, useless but well-paid positions, titles, favours, and orders. Even toward "la favorite rôture," they display cringing politeness; they make ill-natured remarks behind her back, but face to face with her their lips flow over with honeyed flatteries. "Not only have I the

¹ Rica à Ibden, Lettre xxiv.

entire nobility at my feet," said Pompadour to Bernis one day, "but even my little dog is tired of homage."

In France there is a thing that is called "le protocole"; it is said that its precepts even now, under the third Republic, bind official life under stricter forms than in any other European land. It is a venerable document, which in Louis XV.'s time was several hundred years old—a codification of all the interminably complicated rules which, in the course of time, had risen for the guidance of life at the Bourbon Court. "Le protocole," even in the eighteenth century, was the holy book of the Court, and, like the other, had its skilled and devout ministers. One of the most learned and orthodox and literal interpreters of it was the Duke of Luynes, a thoroughly honourable man of unimpeachable character, but a little comical in the seriousness with which he, for twenty-three long years, wrote down every single day his observations and comments on the small intrigues of court life and absurd questions of etiquette; credulously and unsmilingly he notes all the most subtle nuances of precedence, and introduces us into a labyrinth of established customs which every courtier with any self-respect was supposed to have at his fingers' ends.

It is certainly not an easy thing. Versailles swarms with ladies and gentlemen, all of whom consider themselves extremely important potentates, each on his round of the ladder of rank; it is a whole little town—fourteen hundred persons attached to the king's, four hundred and fifty to the queen's personal service,—and every movement has its inflexible ritual, its casuistry, its unforeseen possibilities, which are discussed with passion and scholastic subtlety: it is important to be on the watch—a mistake, a word out of place, a gesture, can ruin a career. Nothing, not even the most natural things, can be undertaken by his Majesty without the most accurate regulations and without rousing competition as to who should have the honour of assisting him in the most intimate manner. When Frederick II. was bored he had his people tell him how the King of France dressed and

undressed; it always put him in a good humour. The regulations were so complicated that it sometimes happened that he did not get dressed at all, because they could not agree as to the order in which it should take place—from top to toe: the furniture in the royal apartment often stood full of dust because the lackeys were quarrelling as to whose privilege it was to dust it.

Since Taine's famous book on 'L'Ancien Régime,' the etiquette practised at the Bourbon Court is too well-known to make it necessary to go into details. It was not conducive to making its worshippers more important or to ennobling them in any way. There lay no higher interests, no thoughts of state or fatherland under the tyrannical regulations, and beneath the complicated good-breeding, shabby passions and mean vices were germinating. The Duke of Luynes' disinterestedness was an honourable exception; as a rule they did not trouble about honour, Court life was expensive, it was necessary to secure favour and money, and the high-born gentlemen were not fastidious in the choice of their means; in a comedy of the day one hears of

"Ce courtisan si fier, si craint dans la province,
Rampant chez les ministres et bas devant le prince."¹

One day Pompadour discovered one of the leaders of the Court, a knight of the Golden Fleece, squeezing her chambermaid's hand in order to ingratiate himself with her; the Duke of Tresnes amused du Barry by calling himself "le sapajou de Mme. du Barry," and joyfully surrendered his hump to the noble entertainment of the mighty dame. It was the same duke that, in his capacity as chancellor, gave the Cross of St Louis to a soldier of the navy, because he had done France a service by importing a wig for the royal mistress. Envy and slander lurk in the corners of this world where each one is thinking only of advancing his own interests and if possible lessening that of others. Faithful-

¹ Chauvau: "L'homme de Cour," Comédie en 5 actes. 1767.

ness is not a consideration ; if one can help oneself by playing traitor to his friend, one does not scruple to do so ; to break marriage vows is considered quite *comme il faut* ; numerous gallant intrigues are woven and new scandals are passed from mouth to mouth daily ; in the darkness of the night there sometimes took place the most audacious violations of the protocol's most holy precepts in regard to precedence ; the lackey slipped into the apartments of the duchess, while the duke was out amusing himself with the chambermaid. One day the king said to the Prince of Conti that he thought it was very humiliating that all the generals of France were foreigners, and that the country no longer seemed to produce military geniuses. "That is because in our days our wives keep to their lackeys," answered the prince.

Life, empty and unproductive, passes in a whirl of dissipation—balls, masquerades, theatrical performances, hunting parties, dinners and suppers without cease ; never any serious work, never a moment's solitude ; a collection of drones who consume the honey without working, says the Marquis d'Argenson of his peers.

Fortunately for the memory of the French nobility, this Court life, where an elegant toilet, a blameless manner and a pleasant conversational gift¹ were the only virtues, did not engulf it entirely. There were a number of seigneurs who had access to the palace without really belonging to the Court ; they had their rank, and they took part in social life, but they did not live at Versailles and were not obliged to flatter and beg in order to exist. They had their hotels in Paris and their summer chateaux in the neighbourhood, where they gathered about them the *élite* of the intelligence of the land. Among these grands seigneurs there were not a few in possession of the highest culture of their time ; not only their wine-cellars but their libraries were well supplied and did honour to them ; many of them were authors, artists,

¹ "Le sot de la cour dit ses sottises plus élégamment que le sot de la ville ne dit les siennes."—Duclos, *Œuvr.*, i. 170.

and scientists. With knightly disinterestedness they let themselves be carried away by the revolutionary ideas of the day and helped to prepare for the new time which was to be their own destruction. And their ladies were not far behind them; in spite of their visits and social distractions they found time to read and study. And they were not satisfied with history, sociology, and philosophy, but also made a thorough study of medicine and natural science, which was the fashion of the age. You remember how poor Mme. de Warens was constantly busying herself with pots and retorts, trying to make curative drugs and to find gold; it was more serious with Mme. du Châtelet, Voltaire's famous friend, who studied Newton for years and undertook experiments in physics and chemistry at Cirey with her lover. The stories of the young Countess of Coigny are somewhat ludicrous and smack of feminine exaggeration—she was the one who on her travels always took a corpse in her trunk so as to have material for dissection at hand. A certain desire for notoriety probably animated both these ladies, whose intellectuality, apart from their interest in belles-lettres, was of such recent date; but when one reads their memoirs and letters and hears the subjects they talked about, and sees in what and in whom they interested themselves, one is bound to respect both their intelligence and their broad-mindedness.

Duclos, as early as 1750, observed the widespread fermentation going on about him. It is the beginning of the readjustment of all values which came to an explosion forty years later, an explosion of which neither Duclos nor any of his contemporaries had more than a very shadowy presentiment.

One of the visible signs of this fermentation was the fissure which begins to appear distinctly in the wall of the French caste-system. Good society begins to be mixed; it becomes a common thing to see advocates, authors, financiers and artists at the castles of the dukes and counts. However, one must not form too exaggerated an opinion of this equal-

isation; when it is represented now and then that the philosophers attended the salons of the nobles as equals, it is incorrect. We have heard how natural it was for Mme. de Besenval to serve dinner in the kitchen for the still unknown Rousseau; as is well known Voltaire came to feel what it means to carry partnership with titled friends too far—in the insult he suffered at the hands of M. de Rohan; Mme. du Deffand, who although she admits certain celebrities, like Voltaire and Diderot, to her salon, none the less looks upon intellectual lights in general as a band of buffoons (“tous les histrions beaux-esprits”); the highly cultivated Duchess of Choiseul loves literature and does honour to the authors, but she will not have any association with them,¹ and even the Count of Ségur, who is so enthusiastic over philosophers and their works, betrays himself when he quite involuntarily mentions what a pleasure it is to him to “stoop” to them.²

Notwithstanding these and many other evidences of the superciliousness of the nobility, this democratic levelling progresses none the less surely and certainly throughout the eighteenth century, and good society in the middle of the century was not nearly so exclusive as it had been. There are several reasons for this undoubted but slow social revolution. The chief cause of course lies in the growing power of money. It was expensive to be a courtier, and no cheaper to take part in the whirl of Parisian life; mistresses, equipages, a great house and high play could quickly eat up an old substantial fortune; it could happen that a grand seigneur, after a wild night at cards, might find himself obliged to mortgage his paternal castle the next morning to pay his debt of honour; otherwise these cavaliers were not so particular about their obligations; they borrowed and borrowed without thinking of paying back, despised their creditors and respected each other reciprocally according to the size of their debts. But at last there always came a time when

¹ Letter to Mme. du Deffand, 7/8 1768.

² Du Ségur : *Mémoires, Souvenirs et Anecdotes*, i. 41 (coll. Barrière).

they could not keep this up any longer and they faced the necessity of selling their own persons and their escutcheons in order to save themselves from ruin. Poirier's son-in-law became a well-known type, and Poirier himself was just as willing to enter into the transaction as under the Second Empire. The young gentleman's noble parents bowed to the necessity, and consoled themselves by scorning their new family. "Even the best ground needs manure," said the Countess of Grignan when she allowed her son to marry the daughter of the wealthy tax-collector, Saint Armand. The bridegroom himself often went to the altar with the most cynically unreserved remarks on his lips in regard to the nature of the shabby transaction, fully determined to break his vows immediately; indeed it sometimes happened that he seized the booty without having filled the merely formal obligation which was the assumption of the transaction; this was the case with M. d'Evreux, count and general, who sold himself for a couple of millions to the financier Crozat, whose twelve-year-old daughter he agreed to marry. The wedding took place, but the bride remained with her mother. The count drew his income from his "ingot," as he called her, but she never moved into his house, although she found consolation in other counts, who valued her because she was not their countess.¹

There is some excuse for the nobles in lending themselves to these hideous transactions in that the bourgeois financiers showed an equally vile eagerness in getting their daughters sold, cost what it would. The rich parvenus betrayed themselves in many other ways also; even such an important man as the mighty financier, Samuel Bernard, made himself ridiculous by presenting his portrait unrequested to all the dukes and counts he knew, and it was no more than a fair punishment for his vanity when one fine day he was disagreeably surprised to find his proud form hanging over the seat in the toilet of one of his noble friends. But Samuel Bernard left thirty-two millions, his daughters were married

¹ Roustan, p. 149.

to titled men, and his grandchildren were the Duchesses d'Uzès and de Roquelaure, the Marchionesses of Clermont-Tonnerre and of Lévis-Mirepoix.

However, this incipient equalisation between the world of finance and the nobility was not founded only on these mésalliances which were caused by the poverty of the nobility and the vanity of the moneyed men; the increased prestige and culture of the financiers was just as vital a cause. Even in the beginning of the century Turcaret, the despised blood-sucking usurer of the comedy, was a legitimate type drawn directly from reality, and there were good reasons for a certain banker to offer (though in vain) poverty-stricken Lesage a hundred thousand francs if he would repress his comedy. But about 1750 conditions were quite changed. Turcaret was among the despicable exceptions, disowned by his own class, and although the sordid miser still occasionally might appear in the plays of the day, this was only a literary relic which no longer corresponded to real conditions. Grimm wrote about this type of by-gone literary character—"The vulgar and laughable financier whom the author has drawn from copies of which we have long since become tired no longer exists. Perhaps this portrait might have resembled some one fifty years ago, at the time when Lesage wrote his comedy of Turcaret, but nowadays, when our financiers, as a rule, are very amiable men with good and hospitable homes, and have not the least likeness to those ancient misers . . . it is absurd to come with these uninteresting figures which are no longer to be found."¹

The science of high finance was about to become a profession; national finance had become one of the hobby-horses of the day; those who had to do with money were no longer looked upon as useless and injurious parasites, but as mediators in an important and honourable function of society. And many of them deserved the social esteem which was given them, noble personalities who executed their difficult work without cruelty or exaggerated desire

¹ Grimm : Correspondance, ii. 245, 15. June 1753.

for gain, and assuaged the poverty about them with splendid but unostentatious generosity; highly cultured men who furnished their homes with real taste and understanding, and assembled about them there all the culture and intellectuality of which Paris could boast, sometimes even artists and authors; indeed one of them, the noble Helvetius, ranked among the writers of the day worthy of mention.

The magistrates also began to leave their offices and take part in social life at this time. The magistracy—gentlemen of the council, presidents of the parliament, advocates, &c.—stood nearest the military nobility on the social ladder, and for centuries had formed an extremely exclusive caste; ceremonious men of affairs, for whom it was not fitting to go to the theatre or to enter upon any kind of worldly amusement, shut up within their own circle, where they abandoned themselves to the thorough investigation of juridical questions and political affairs. Now the ranks began to open, and one could see black capes fluttering about the salons here and there; the most famous of them, Montesquieu, was not to be met with so frequently, having other things to think about, although he was seen rather often at Mme. de Rochefort's; but the type of the worldly magistrate was *Président de Hénault* (1685-1770), elegant, intelligent, talented in many directions, unusually musical, an author, attractive to ladies, an intimate, too intimate friend of Mme. du Deffand and many others; pliable, quick-witted, unabashed until the very end, when he closed his eyes smilingly, curious to know whether "God would improve on acquaintance."

Among these representatives of the nobility, the magistracy, and the world of finance, mingled the authors and the artists, the strongest fermentation-element in this company, more or less respected, often sought after, worshipped and spoiled, but sometimes also kicked out of the door, humble or shameless, witty or would-be witty, always eager to assert themselves; we meet all the well-known names of the century, from Voltaire to Marmontel, although the greatest

of them (Voltaire, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Buffon) gradually withdrew from social life in order to accomplish their proper work.

Of these elements the good society of the day was composed; it called itself by the presumptuous name of "the world," and was recruited from four classes of society at very different stages on the ladder of rank, but living in a sort of equality in their social relations—four kinds of nobility, so to speak: the nobility of birth, official nobility, the nobility of money, and the nobility of the intellect; outside of and beneath, quite excluded, stood the millions, the entire middle class, the citizens and the peasants. Through "le monde" ran the road to fame, the only one—to court, to the academy, to literary success, to positions,—members of "le monde," these hundreds of favoured ones composed Paris; the other hundreds of thousands do not count; it is the ladies and gentlemen of this circle we meet in the memoirs, these and no others; here the new thoughts of the day are born and spread, here the intrigues of state-life are spun, here the history of the country is shaped; it is this world to which the natives dream of obtaining access, and where distinguished foreigners, both diplomats and travellers, seek their fortunes.

Let us peep into this circle and see what sort of life is led there; to begin with, we shall look at the moral *niveau*. We look through Mme. d'Épinay's memoirs, and learn to know a whole gallery of people who meet at Chevrette or Épinay or at the hotels of the family in Paris. In the first place, there is Mme. d'Épinay herself. When very young she was married to her cousin, and still loves her husband passionately; but he is an irreclaimable *debauché*, neglects her and insults her in every possible way, lives with ballet-dancers and opera ladies; he infects her with a secret disease; at last kills her love and makes her unhappy; she soon finds consolation, however, in Francueil,¹ to whom she,

¹ Francueil, in his later days, seems to have become a well-behaved gentleman; he married for the second time, and became George Sand's grandfather.

in her ignorance, is so unfortunate as to communicate the disease she had got from her husband; however, Francueil himself is no white sheep; there had even been ugly rumours of his relations with his stepmother, Mme. Dupin; but even if this is slander, it is quite certain that he was soon to be seen in company with his mistress' husband, abandoning himself to orgies with that gentleman's fine "lady friends"; he gets drunk at parties, neglects and insults Mme. d'Épinay, who is once more in the depths of despair. But this time also she arouses herself, and throws herself into the arms of the well-known German literateur Grim, who had just withdrawn from, or perhaps still stood in the most intimate relations with a famous actress, Mme. du Fel. Mme. Jully, Mme. d'Épinay's sister-in-law, seemed to be most happily married; she and M. Jully were just like two turtle doves; one can therefore imagine Mme. d'Épinay's surprise when her sister-in-law came to her one day and asked her to do her a favour of a rather peculiar kind: a new guest was expected at the castle, one of the most admired actors of the day, Jelyotte. Jelyotte was Mme. Jully's lover, and the request she had to make to her sister-in-law was that she, under a plausible excuse, should have M. Jully moved from the bedroom which he then occupied and which adjoined that of his wife, and have Jelyotte placed there instead. Mme. d'Épinay had her scruples, but she conquered them, and Jelyotte was lodged most conveniently. A year later Mme. Jully again opened her heart to her sister-in-law; she had become tired of Jelyotte, but her heart was aflame for the Comte de Vergennes, and she wanted Mme. d'Épinay to help her to get rid of her burdensome lover; this time her sister-in-law had even greater scruples than before, but she conquered these also, lent her active assistance, and Mme. Jully got things arranged as she wished. Mme. Jully, however, did not live long; a short time afterwards she had a violent attack of small-pox, which finished her; the last friendly turn that Mme. d'Épinay did for her was to burn all her love-letters, for which she came very near having to pay dearly.

Mme. d'Épinay's half-sister, the Countess d'Houdetot, was looked upon as the wonder of the day on account of her faithfulness in love; but it was not her husband that was the object of her staunch tenderness—it was her lover, Marquis Saint-Lambert. Among the guests who came to Épinay was Mlle. d'Ette, an ambitious and intriguing young woman, already past her first youth; she was for a long time Mme. d'Épinay's good friend, until the latter saw through her. Mlle. d'Ette was of noble family, but without money; if she was to uphold her position in “le monde” she had to rely on her charms, which, it seems, were both dazzling and lucrative; and so she had become the official mistress of the knight of Valori, but this relation had lasted several years and was beginning to be precarious; the knight was difficult and peevish, and she was now visiting about at the different castles in order to find something better; but, as has been said, she was no longer in the first bloom of youth, and, as far as I remember, did not succeed; she probably had to depart with her knight. One of Mme. d'Épinay's acquaintances was Mlle. Quinault, a former actress, who received some of the most famous men of the day in her salon. When the best-informed of the memoirists try to estimate the number of her lovers, the calculation requires many lines; now she had become older and limited herself to Duclos, who was not fastidious; it was he of whom Mme. de Rochefort said that, in order to be happy, he needed only “du pain, du fromage et la première venue.”

We see they faithfully followed Louis XV.'s example in these circles; I could continue *ad infinitum* on this subject; there is very little difference in the accounts of the many memoir-authors; “la chronique scandaleuse” of the day is inexhaustible, but I think we have had enough of it.

The manner in which marriages were arranged was an extenuating circumstance, at least for the nobility; the young people concerned were not consulted at all; it was a question of etiquette and a business transaction; no one ex-

pected constancy.¹ "My father bids me mount my carriage and drive to Vienna," says the Prince de Ligne; "I arrive at a house where a number of beautiful ladies were assembled—married or unmarried, I knew not which. They placed me beside the youngest; eight days afterwards I was married to her; I was twenty, my little wife was fifteen. We had not said one word to each other. This is the manner in which I took the step that is said to be the most serious one in life."

Under such conditions it is quite natural that marriage was not a bond, indeed, that connubial faithfulness sank to the point of being almost ludicrously bad form, not befitting people of the world. "It is certainly no exaggeration when Mme. de Staal-Delaunay in a comedy, '*La Mode*,' depicts a countess who loves her husband, but who nevertheless keeps lovers, "so as not to make herself ridiculous by eccentric behaviour" ("*se chamarrer de ridicule*"), and because life is a "tissue of considerations of propriety" (!) ("*un tissu de bienséances*"). The countess has a friend, the marquise, who confides to her that her lover, Acaste, has formed the ridiculous idea of wanting to marry her: "Perhaps it would be best to take him at his word.—What do you mean?—Why, that you had better marry him, so as to get rid of him,"—and the marquise immediately follows her friend's wise advice.

In such a world a cavalier like the Duc de Richelieu would go down to history as something of a legendary hero; a shabby character, supercilious and impertinent toward his inferiors, oily and cringing when there was anything to be gained, suspected—and probably rightfully—of having betrayed his fatherland for money; but irresistible to all women, loved by princesses as well as by the daughters of the bourgeoisie, elegant and witty, "the French Alcibiades" (Voltaire). King of fashion and the envied ideal of all seducers, his name had become proverbial. "Fronsac

¹ "Les mariages chez les grands sont une indécence convenue," says Chamfort.

would never have done that,"¹ said the ladies when they were dissatisfied with their lovers; numerous histories were told of him with admiration; for him there were no obstacles that could not be overcome; once he loved a lady whose porter was not to be bribed, but the duke found a way; he rented the house opposite, got the chambermaid to hold the trap-door in the roof open, laid a plank over from his house, boldly walked across and got what he wanted. He visited Mme. de la Popelinière, the wife of the well-known financier, entering the house through the chimney, &c., &c. There is no end to these stories; three generations of women became his willing prey, and when he married for the third time at eighty-four, he was not even true to his wife then. He always came out of it with a whole skin, he rescued himself from the most trying situations by his presence of mind and wit; indeed, even when he was the betrayed one, he turned the laughter on the other side by a cheerful cynicism. One day he surprised his duchess in an intimate *tête-à-tête* with her equerry; he remained standing quietly and remarked: "How very careless, duchess; suppose any one else had come in."

Although morals were very loose, yet a certain exterior propriety was observed; if one compares the stories which Brantôme tells in '*Femmes galantes*' with the life we read of in the memoirs of the eighteenth century, we find no great difference in the morality, but the tone has become different; one can see that long-continued observance of court etiquette lies between; the rudeness has disappeared, life has become a tissue of *bienséances*, as the countess said in the comedy; "good form," which is of comparatively new date,² has already become a power to which all must bend. One day Duclos was sitting talking to Mmes. de Rochefort and de Mirepoix; "nowadays," he said, "the courtesans have begun to be prudish, they will not hear any kind of a

¹ He was Duke of Fronsac before he was made Duke of Richelieu.

² "Il y a peu de temps que cette expression (le bon ton) est inventée," writes Duclos in 1750.—*Œuvr.*, i. 165.

story, if it is a little gay; in this respect they are much more particular than the most decorous ladies." And thereupon he begins to relate a pretty shady story, and then one more which is still worse; but when he begins on number three, which threatens to go beyond all limits, Mme. de Rochefort stops him with these words: "Now be careful, Duclos, you certainly overestimate our decorum."¹ So they did not put up with everything, even though they could digest almost anything if it was served in an equivocal form that could be taken in a proper way also, but this was imperative. Propriety was inversely proportional to virtue. "By my words I return to virtue what I take from her by my actions," said the Countess of Boufflers.

In observing the worldly life of the eighteenth century it is impossible to overlook all the gallant adventures which filled the memoirs of the day and which are common to all of its chroniclers; undoubtedly it is, if not the deepest, at least one of the most conspicuous traits of the physiognomy of the day; but it would be unfair and incorrect in a high degree if one thought thereby to have exhausted the characteristics of these people. As I have already hinted, there were many brilliant men and women among them; talent, knowledge, intellect, and wit. Mme. d'Épinay was no ordinary empty coquette; as far as love was concerned, she was a disillusionised idealist; if d'Épinay had been different, she would probably have been happy in her marriage; from her memoirs we learn to know her as a talented authoress, with sharp powers of observation, keen psychological insight, and a power of characterisation by no means slight; she was seriously interested in the questions of the day, brooded over religion and made wise remarks on the subject of education; she had the intelligent woman's respect for the power of intellect,—submitted

¹ See Auger's biographical introduction to Duclos' works, i. 25. According to Mme. d'Épinay, Duclos was, on this occasion, simply driven out of the house on account of his loose talk.—Mém., i. 228.

with great patience to Duclos' impertinences and, as we shall see, put up with Rousseau longer than could have been expected. Mme. d'Houdetot had a rich nature; she charmed all with her harmless gaiety and surprising fancy, she wrote lyric poems, which still bring a message from a warm beating heart. Jully was a prominent sculptor. Francueil had all possible talents, played brilliantly on all sorts of instruments, made his own violins, was painter, architect, watch-maker, everything in heaven and on earth, and understood, as few did, how to make use of his many accomplishments and his well-weighed opinions in agreeable conversation.¹ Even M. d'Épinay, of whom there is otherwise not much good to tell, at any rate had a fine musical ear and a highly developed taste. And so it was with them all. Most of the ladies and gentlemen who are prominently mentioned in the memoirs or who played a real part in the great world were remarkable in one way or another, if by nothing else, at least by the power of quick-witted repartee.

This was bound to be the case if the salons were to become the means of expressing the intellectual life of the day—as they really did become in many respects.

Salons were no novelties in the eighteenth century; even under Louis XIV. the aristocracy had established social assemblages where an attempt was made to make science and literature fashionable, to tone down the too inaccessible technicalities and bring them within the range of feminine interests. This continued throughout the eighteenth century, but the tone became quite different. In the first salons, Hôtel Rambouillet and its imitators, the company was still purely aristocratic; the members moved about with considerable stiffness, an effort was made at elegant modes of expression; a sort of scheduled sociability prevailed, all guests had to furnish some entertainment, the evenings often had the character of academic meetings, new books were read aloud and discussed, the performances were prepared beforehand, were not always amusing and had too

¹ Cf. George Sand : *Mémoires de ma vie*.

much the stamp of elegant pedantry; the cause of this was that the Marquis of Rambouillet demanded the strictest correctness, a bold speech was not suffered, the least rashness made a guest impossible, and everybody was extremely loyal, faithful to the king, orthodox and moral; they talked literature and psychological subtleties, but religion, politics, and the questions of the day were excluded.

In the course of the eighteenth century the reins loosened, pedantry disappeared little by little, and was replaced by the most unlimited freedom. The Marquis de Lambert's salon in the Palais Mazarin formed a sort of transition (1710-1733). The guests were still not free from preciosity, the marquis also strictly demanded fine manners and moral deportment, and he too had his reading evenings, when neither Hénault, Marmontel, nor Duclos had a very good time. But nevertheless the new thought was paving a way by which it was to enter this salon. The high-born hostess stood unconditionally on the side of the moderns in the violent struggle between "les anciens et les modernes"; Fontenelle and Lamotte were among her regular guests, she was attracted towards the philosophers with their rationalism and their democracy, called God "l'Être suprême," and was not without a sentimental condescension towards her servants "whom one should treat as though they were unhappy friends." Mme. de Lambert's salon was open, to a certain extent, to ordinary mortals without a title of nobility; one meets there not only celebrities like Lamotte, Marmontel, Fontenelle, and Duclos, but also less well-known artists, singers, and actors; the life outside is approaching nearer and nearer and sometimes it encroaches. It is true, it was a long time before the salons came to play any political rôle, but the Palais Mazarin exercised an influence, nevertheless, in many ways; everybody desired to come there, an invitation was almost the same as a brevet of wit and carried distinction; and he who dreamed of immortality in the Academy did well to secure admission to the Marquis de Lambert's salon; for here intrigues were successfully manœuvred to the advan-

tage of the regular guests ; in the course of twenty years a large majority of the new Academicians came from here, and it was on this account that this salon was sometimes called jokingly "*l'antichambre de l'Académie*." Throughout the century, the development of salon life continued in this direction ; at Mme. de Tencin's, Mme. du Deffand's, Mme. Geoffrin's, Mlle. Lespinasse's, the society became more and more motley ; the ceremoniousness disappeared, the long-drawn-out lectures were replaced by light and incidental conversation, discussion ventured upon the most dangerous subjects, it no longer limited itself to literary and psychological subtleties, but dwelt with partiality on such subjects as the existence of God, eternity of matter, the rottenness of society, the mysteries of love, modern natural scientific education, in short, on all the revolutionary thoughts which emanated from the philosophers of the day. At Baron d'Holbach's there was nothing in heaven and on earth that could not be said, and at Mlle. Quinault's, whose dinners were called "*les dîners du bout du banc*," on account of the cramped room, the most unrestricted liberty of speech prevailed. The first time that Mme. d'Épinay was present at one of these dinners she was surprised to see that when the dessert was brought in the hostess signalled to her fourteen-year-old niece and the servants to disappear. Mme. d'Épinay who had fallen in love with the little niece, asked that she might remain. "No indeed, she shall not," answered Mlle. Quinault, "it is quite enough that we keep ourselves within bounds until dessert for the sake of this youngster. The moment has now come for us to put our elbows on the table and say whatever we want to, and then the child and the servants would only be in the way." And one must acknowledge that her carefulness was quite necessary ; for the discussion which now took place on the subject of modesty, between the hostess, Duclos and Saint-Lambert, was not fitting either for the ears of young girls or servants.¹

¹ Mme. d'Épinay, *Mém.*, i. 217 ff.

The men often went from the salon to the cafés; there were several cafés that had their regular guests among the philosophers; the most famous was the Café du Procope, where Duclos, Boindin, and sometimes Rousseau and others also went. The tone here was, of course, just as free as in the salons; but, nevertheless, it was necessary to be careful here, as the Bastille was a constant danger, and so at Procope they had made up a jargon of their own which was quite unintelligible to others; soul was Margot, liberty Jeanneton, &c. They called God M. de l'Être. One day a stranger came in, he looked a little queer, and they suspected that he was an agent of the authorities. He sat listening to the philosophers and finally broke into the conversation with a question: "Pardon me," he said, "but do not mind my asking who this M. de l'Être is, who has behaved so badly and with whom you are so dissatisfied." "He—is a police spy," answered Boindin, and all the others burst out laughing.¹

In these circles—the literary salons and cafés,—what was sought after, above all, was presence of mind, repartee, the gift of being able to arrange words in tasteful bouquets, to sharpen them into points, malicious, but not wounding, to be impertinent without going over the line, to astonish by paradoxes without taking them too seriously, to play with opinions and feelings without ever dropping into plebeian earnestness—all with the most unrestricted freedom, but with no possibility of making a mistake.

Never had wit played such a *rôle* in public as well as private life. "Un bon mot fait la fortune d'un homme," says Mercier. A witty speech could make a man famous, give absolution for all sins, and smooth over the most painful situations; the sallies which passed from mouth to mouth and which were written down in the memoirs with admiration are innumerable. When the Duchess of Roquelaure had twins, after seven months marriage, the duke received his two small daughters with the salutation: "I had not

¹ Duclos, Œuvres, x. 57 note.

expected you so early, ladies." The Count of Forcalquier forgot himself one day so much that he, in his anger, gave his countess a box on the ear. She hastened to her lawyer in order to get a divorce, but, learning that she could do nothing without witnesses, she went home and boxed the count on the ears with these words: "Here is your slap—I have got no use for it at all." The Cardinal of Polignac was telling Mme. du Deffand a legend of St Denis who, after having been decapitated, walked several miles with his head under his arm. "Oh! that's nothing," interrupted the marquise, "it is only the first step that counts."

The merry jest followed these people up to their dying hour; I have mentioned how Hénault, on his death-bed, expressed his curiosity as to "whether God would improve on acquaintance." The amiable Mme. Geoffrin, who was in reality religious, but who associated a great deal with the philosophers, had a very pious daughter, the Marchioness of Forté-Imbault; she could not endure the philosophers and would not admit them to her mother's death-bed. When Mme. Geoffrin heard this, she said smilingly: "My daughter is like Godfrey of Bouillon, she defends my grave against the infidels." The Duke of Ormont was about to die, the Chevalier of Airagues sat by his bedside. "I beg a thousand pardons," said the duke, "for being obliged to die in your presence." The chevalier, who was quite taken aback by so much good breeding, could not think of anything else to say but: "For God's sake, duke, don't mind me."

The salons of the eighteenth century had a great influence on the intellectual life of the time, although this influence was not always fortunate.

In many respects it was certainly advantageous for the authors that they had access to good society and learned how to conduct themselves; many of them became brilliant conversationalists; Voltaire's ready wit never made a mistake; Duclos, who is not always amusing to read, was, according to the evidences of the time, overflowing with conversational conceits; Chamfort always hit the nail on

the head with his biting remarks; Diderot's conversation was a constant stream of surprises; even d'Alembert, who seems so dry, was full of mad whims when he took his regular place in the salon of his dear friend Mlle. de l'Espinasse. When in the salons the authors laid aside their pedantic and professional manner, they became men of the world, and learned how to express their thoughts so that intellectual ladies could understand them without too much effort. Marmontel writes: "It was a school just as useful as it was agreeable for me, and I derived the greatest possible benefit from my studies there. He who wishes to write with precision, energy, and power, probably needs only to associate with men; but he who in his style strives after subtlety, grace, and that evanescent element called charm, does well, I think, to seek the society of ladies. When I read that Pericles made sacrifices each morning to the Graces, I understand it to mean that he ate breakfast with Aspasia every day."

It was of especial importance to a race of authors whose mission largely consisted in the production of explanatory material and propaganda for the new ideas, to develop their style to the point of striking clearness, conversational naturalness, and persuasive eloquence.

For a long time the salons were the most important hot-beds for the propagation of the new ideas. It was "the world" that ruled the world. Through them the philosophers conquered the best element of the aristocracy. "Without longing for the past, without anxiety for the future," writes le Comte de Ségur in his memoirs, "we, the younger members of the nobility, wandered care-free over a carpet of flowers that covered an abyss. We laughed rebelliously over the old customs, at the feudal pride of our fathers, and at their ceremonious etiquette; everything that was old-fashioned seemed burdensome and ridiculous. . . . We followed enthusiastically the philosophical teachings which the daring intellectual writers proclaimed. Voltaire fascinated our minds, Rousseau moved our hearts; we felt

a secret pleasure in attacking the old scaffolding which seemed to us Gothic and absurd.”¹

It is true this was written several years later than the time with which we are now occupied; but philosophical radicalism had already begun to get access into the leading circles by the middle of the century, and the salons were the most important instruments for the revolutionary cause. Newspapers in the modern meaning of the word did not exist at that time; the daily manipulation of the human mind, which now overwhelms all classes of society like a gigantic flood, was then quite unknown; public opinion was in its infancy, and no one could guess its coming power. But the salons were the beginning, or at least one of the most important beginnings; the new opinions had to go through society in order to reach further, the sanction of the aristocracy was still a necessity; and in these dinners or evening parties bullets were cast, catch-words were invented, which later went forth to exercise their explosive activity. To mention a single example: it was in a salon that Chamfort first used the expression “third estate,” the expression which Sieyès took later as the title of the famous brochure which stands as one of the entrance-gates to the Revolution.

So the significance of salon life for intellectual growth was an important characteristic in the physiognomy of the time, both on account of the training it gave to literary men and as the customary organ for the spread of the new thought. But it had also its serious drawbacks.

In the first place, the unreasonable frequency of these social gatherings; it became a ruinous fashion; every lady who wished to be somebody in the social whirl had to have her salon; a man who was popular had every single day of the week engaged; it became a dissipated life without any connected periods for work, without solitude, without time to collect one’s self. Social intercourse became an unavoidable condition, a necessary excitement for many, and the

¹ Cf. Vicomtesse de Noailles on the Revolution and the Aristocracy.

overstrained brilliancy practised was often a waste of forces that hindered the production of any more lasting intellectual achievement. Mirabeau calls Chamfort an electric head, and he means by that a mind which sent out sparks when in contact with society; but in the few writings which this unusually talented man has left behind him, we see very little of the electricity. There were many such electric heads, whose power was wasted in the fireworks of conversation.

But even when this was not the case, salon life was not an unqualified good. Clever women ruled the salons; it was they that dictated the tone, and they composed the ideal public of whom the authors thought when they were writing their books. What this public demanded was clearness, liveliness, lightness. But now there are numerous questions in heaven and on earth which are not as simple as they might be, and which do not admit of being handled with lightness, even if thereby apparent clearness is obtained; and there are others in which entertainment and brilliancy are obtained at the cost of seriousness and depth. It is not to be denied that French literature of the eighteenth century, with all its brilliancy, often suffers from superficiality and frivolity; there was even some truth in Mme. du Deffand's biting remark about Montesquieu's most famous work, "*Ce n'est pas l'esprit des lois, c'est de l'esprit sur les lois.*"

In the salon sharp edges were ground off, conventional forms were established; the tyranny of fashion was strict and laid a crushing hand on originality. "One does so, or one does not do so," says Duclos; "that is the law on which our judgments rest. It is seldom that any one is so bold as to ask, ought one to do so, or ought one not to do so?" Nobody dared do what others did not do, for fear of being laughed at, and never has laughter been such a great power as during this time¹ when wit and scorn and ridicule flourished. It is quite consistent with the conspicuously intellectual

¹ "*On sacrifie sa vie à son honneur, souvent son honneur à sa fortune et quelquefois sa fortune à la crainte du ridicule.*"—Duclos, i. 174.

character of the time; people were living in an extremely critical period, where all values were about to be dissolved and new ones were being formed, where it had become the fashion to despise everything that the past honoured, where few had courage to confess their love for their wives, or would acknowledge that they felt offended by blasphemy. There was aggressive warfare along the whole line, and those who would not join in it were considered stupid, ridiculous, certain to be out-distanced.

One day when Mme. d'Épinay was confiding all her sorrows to her sister-in-law, Mme. de Jully, the latter consoled her by telling her that she must remember that "there are very few things in the run of life that deserve to have any weight attached to them." These words are extremely characteristic of that generation, or at least of its worldly intelligence; they could be interested enough and eager about many things, but there was nothing that occupied them entirely, everything turned into dissipation; they could be very refreshing in their rebellious disrespectfulness, but they lacked that respect which alone gives deeper meaning to disrespect. Nothing was important; love was parcelled out into flirtations, truth into *bon-mots*.

Therefore, in the midst of this whirl of society where intellect and wit celebrate brilliant triumphs, one sees boredom protrude its grinning face; sometimes we meet there a feeling of emptiness that approaches despair. Mme. du Deffand, the most important but by no means the most amiable of the ladies that set the fashion of the day, exclaims one day, "All conditions, all creatures, seem to be equally unhappy, from the angel to the oyster; the misfortune is in being born."¹ In spite of her brilliant intelligence, her social success, the satisfaction her vanity obtained, she was anything but happy; it was not until her very last days that real but too long-delayed love came into her life and brought some solace to her hard and withered heart.

¹ "Toutes les conditions, toutes les espèces me paraissent également malheureuses, depuis l'ange jusqu'à l'huître, le fâcheux est d'être né."

Tedium was not the disease of Mme. du Deffand only, it was "le mal du siècle." And out of this feeling of emptiness sprang a longing, an indefinite longing, for something that was not, for permanent solid values, for conviction, for something that could fill the emptiness,—for the mysterious.

It has often been remarked how strange it was that this sceptical generation, which did not believe in anything in heaven or on earth, allowed themselves to be so duped by the arts of Cagliostro or let Mesmer with his enchanted stick lead them by the nose. But this credulity was quite a natural expression of a want which had by no means ceased to exist, but had simply been pushed into the background because it could no longer be satisfied in the worn-out ways of the Church.

They admired and praised, and were amused at many witty and wise men who, with indisputable clearness, proved the nonsense of the order of society and the unreason in the old faith, but they learned most about what they should not believe, and the longing for conviction remained latent, but not dead.

The answer to this longing was Rousseau. The first time he found his own voice one felt that here was a new tone, a vibration not heard for a long time; that here was a man who not only meant what he said, but who believed it with his whole heart; who not only could prove it to others but had proved it to himself; an earnest man.

Once more one had the feeling that after all "in the run of life there are things that deserve some weight to be attached to them." And all that longing after feeling and passion and true humanity which, under the sway of intellectualism, had been dammed up in the hearts of men, rushed to meet him with a gratefulness and admiration of which there have been few examples throughout the intellectual history of the entire world.

XVI.

ROUSSEAU IN PARIS.

WHEN Rousseau, in the autumn of 1744, returned from Venice, it was the third time he had come to Paris. The first time was in 1731, when he was sent there at the age of nineteen by the French consul in Soleure to act as tutor to a young nobleman. We remember his bitter disappointment when, with his head full of ideas about palaces of marble and gold, he saw nothing but miserable hovels and ill-smelling passages when he entered the Faubourg St Marceau. He himself maintains, in 'Confessions,' that this first impression never left him, and that he "always retained a secret repulsion for this capital."

The second time was in 1742 when, forced to leave his dear Charmettes, he came to Paris to revolutionise and conquer the world with his music-system. But this "circulating fountain" also got broken, and after a year's futile struggle he started for Venice, where he fared as we have heard.

Now he was in Paris once more, as much without prospects as ever, and he settled there temporarily.

At first we discover scarcely any sign of opposition or conflict between him and the world that surrounded him. He resembles other gifted and ambitious men who came from the provinces to conquer this world-renowned capital; he goes the ways that seem to lead to the goal, seeks influential acquaintances, tries his hand at literary and musical productions, and does everything in his power to advance. He was as poor as a church mouse; it was several years before he succeeded in making the ambassador pay him

what he owed him ; so the struggle was not only for honour but for life itself. The first work he undertook after his diplomatic shipwreck was to complete the opera which had occupied him when he was in the delirium of fever in Rue Verdelet, just before his trip to Venice. After three months' work both text and music were finished.

But then the next question was to set it afloat. Rousseau did as the others did ; he had his Genevan friend Gauffecourt introduce him to the well-known financier, La Popelinière, whose salons set the pace in the musical world. Here Rameau ruled, protected by the master of the house and worshipped by the mistress. Rousseau asked Rameau to read through his opera, but the intractable master refused to do this ; he said that he could not endure to read scores, it tired him too much. La Popelinière found a way out of the difficulty : he let his clever musician play selected parts of it when Rameau was present. He proved to be an extremely unpleasant listener, did not try at all to hide his impatience, and when they came to a part that really was beautiful, lost all self-possession, and, turning on Rousseau, reviled him for being a thief without talent or taste ; he said that the only parts of the opera that were good were stolen, and that the part that was original was miserable trash. But this was not the opinion of all of those present ; the Duke of Richelieu was charmed with the opera, and promised Rousseau that he would have it performed before the Court. However this came to nothing, and later, when there was talk of having it performed at the Opera, it came to no more than a rehearsal ; Rousseau himself withdrew it for fear of a fiasco.

The text to "Les Muses Galantes" is extremely insignificant, made on the usual mould, with the obligato apparatus of gods and allegorical persons ; at the most there are twenty lines that give proof of any poetic emotion and hint faintly at the real Rousseau.¹

¹ In the first "entrée," 4th scene, Hesiod's reply, x. 209, and 5th scene Eglé's song :—

"La vertu des mortels fait leur rang chez les dieux,
Une âme pure, un cœur tendre et sincère
Sont les biens les plus précieux."

Nor is Rousseau's next work of any particular interest, at least not from a literary point of view, except as evidence that he was still wandering on the general highway. However, one could not expect more in this case, as it was only a matter of remodelling an old work.

In honour of the battle of Fontenoy great festivities were prepared at Versailles and Paris in the winter of 1745, among them several operatic performances. On this occasion Rameau's "*Princesse de Navarre*," a musical drama, with text by Voltaire, was brought out; but this piece, in its original state, did not quite suit the occasion. It was rechristened "*Les Fêtes de Ramire*," and a number of changes had to be made in it; neither Voltaire nor Rameau had time, and the Duke of Richelieu, who was managing the affair, thought of Rousseau. He undertook it, and after a number of unpleasantnesses with Rameau, completed it; it was a success, but Rousseau's name was not mentioned on the programme, and the Duke of Richelieu went away without paying him any fee, so he became neither richer nor more famous by this affair.

This was the first time he had come in contact with Voltaire; we know how he had admired him, how thoroughly he had studied him in Savoy, and he still looked up to him as the dazzling pinnacle to which he dreamed of climbing. The letter in which he applies to him is more than respectful: "M. Voltaire, for fifteen years I have worked to make myself worthy of your notice and that interest with which you favour young authors in whom you discover talent;" so he begins, and after having presented, in the most modest terms, some details of his work with the opera, he closes thus: "As far as the recitative is concerned, I hope that you will be so kind as to give me your opinion of it before the opera is performed, and point out to me those places where I may have departed from the way of truth and beauty or, in other words, from your thoughts. Whatever be the outcome of my weak attempt it will always appear to me a matter for pride, since

I owe to it the honour of being known to you, and since it gives me the opportunity to show you the admiration and the respect with which I have the honour of being your humble servant Jean Jacques Rousseau."

At that time Voltaire was looked upon by everybody as a great poet; he had not yet become the philosopher, the acknowledged sponsor to free thought, but as an author of tragedies, comedies, opera texts, and poems, he occupied a unique and uncontested position high above all others.

Rousseau also followed the stream in this respect, and lent a reverent ear to the great celebrity of the day, whom he tried earnestly to imitate; he had not yet begun to feel his own nature struggling to express the soul and the genius so different in kind from that of Voltaire.

Up to this time, however, he had reaped little honour and still less remuneration for all his work, though he had tried his hand at almost everything, even outside of music and literature; if we can believe Grimm, he was even for a time busily occupied in inventing a flying machine.

When things were at their worst his father died, and he tells us that in his wretchedness he thought more of the inheritance he was to get than of the loss of the "best of fathers." He got fifteen hundred gulden, and, of course, that was an immediate relief; but it really helped little; he sent some of it to Mme. de Warens, he had debts to pay, and besides, as we shall soon hear, he had just acquired a family which was not at all cheap to support.

Under these circumstances, when he secured a humble secretaryship, it came like a salvation from absolute need. Before he went to Venice he had been a frequent guest in Mme. Dupin's house, as we know, but as he had been forced to seek La Popelinière's influence in the service of his musical interests, he had had to relinquish this other relation. The fact was that the salons of Dupin and Popelinière were hostile competitors, and there were few that were able to solve the difficult problem of frequenting both. But when Rousseau, after the affair of "Les Muses

Galantes" and his enmity with Rameau, quarrelled with the musical financier's lady, he was once more welcome at Mme. Dupin's.

He became engaged as secretary to her and her stepson Francueil; both of them had literary work in hand, and thought they could make use of Rousseau's information and talent. His salary was not large (900 francs), nor was the work particularly enlivening, especially that that he had to execute for Mme. Dupin, who dictated to him a number of incredibly banal philosophical observations, which certainly must have been an unalloyed suffering for him to record. It is characteristic of the eagerness and forethought with which Rousseau fought for life and honour at this time that, before he agreed to undertake this secretaryship, he made it an express condition that Francueil should use all his influence to have "*Les Muses Galantes*" performed at the opera. Francueil kept his word, too; but, as we have heard, it came no further than to a rehearsal.

This last misfortune gave his ambition a temporary check: "I gave up every plan for advancement or glory, and, without thinking of my real or imagined talents, which benefited me so little, I gave all my time and care to seeking necessary means of existence, . . . abandoned myself quite completely to the service of Mme. Dupin and Francueil."

Rousseau did a tremendous amount of work during this time; but life was by no means only work; Mme. Dupin's salon was sought by the leaders of the aristocracy as well as by the intellectual lights, and a motley crowd of distinguished ladies and gentlemen wandered in and out of this rich patrician house. In the summer or autumn Rousseau accompanied Mme. Dupin to Chenonceaux in Touraine, a magnificent castle which Henry II. had built in his day for Diana of Poitiers. It swarmed with guests who killed time in the most agreeable way. Rousseau took part in the fashionable life, and asserted his individuality in whatever way he could. There was a great

deal of music, and he wrote several trios which were executed by the guests of the house; he also mounted his Pegasus on several occasions. This was the time when private theatricals were much in vogue; no castle lacked its private theatre, and all fashionable ladies and gentlemen were actors; Rousseau was quite without talent as an actor, he was not even capable of learning a *rôle*, but he distinguished himself by putting together in a fortnight a comedy which was called "L'Engagement Téméraire," and which was a success. Rousseau mentions it quite incidentally, and pronounces it to have been without "any merit except much gaiety." We must agree with his opinion, except the latter part of it; now at least it would scarcely force a smile. The intrigue is not bad, rather ingeniously spun, and with several motives which might have been used to advantage; but there is very little indication of character-drawing, and the dialogue is stiff and flat; perhaps it gave a better impression at the performance; but under any circumstances we find very little of what was to be Rousseau's distinction.

Francueil introduced him to his friend Mme. d'Épinay, and he spent the summer of 1749 at La Chevrette in the company which we have already learned to know. In the memoirs of Mme. d'Épinay we have two sketches preserved of him which give us an idea of the impression he made at this time when he was standing on the threshold of his fame. One is from Mme. d'Épinay herself: "He is perhaps unique of his kind, . . . full of compliments without being polite or without seeming so. He seems to be quite ignorant of the forms of social life, but it is easy to see that he is a superior intelligence. . . . His complexion is dark, his fiery eyes give light to his face. When he is talking, he seems beautiful; but when one thinks of him afterwards, he seems ugly. They say he is in bad health and suffers a great deal, a fact which he carefully hides from a sort of vanity; it is that evidently that sometimes makes him look so ferocious. M. de Belgarde, who has talked to him a

great deal, is delighted with him, and has invited him to come here often, at which I am sincerely pleased, as I expect to derive great pleasure from his conversation."

The other picture is from Mlle. d'Ette, and is to be found in a letter from her to her lover, the Knight of Valori: ". . . Francueil introduced that poor devil of an author to us; he is as poor as Job, but has intelligence and vanity for four. . . . They say that his story is just as bizarre as his person, and that is saying not a little; I hope we shall hear it some day. Yesterday little Mme. Maupou and I agreed that we should guess it. 'In spite of his face,' she said (for it is certain he is hideous, although Emilie thinks him beautiful), 'his eyes tell that love has played a great rôle in his romance.' 'No,' I replied, 'his nose tells me that it is vanity.' 'Oh, well, both of them.'"

The two ladies had not been unobservant; he was certainly both unique and ferocious, fiery, intelligent, erotic, uncertain in "les usages du monde" and vain.

Now how did Rousseau himself thrive in this world? It is not difficult to imagine, and he himself has referred to it profusely in many places. We remember his first entrance into this fine society—sitting with Mme. de Besenval, Mme. de Broglie, and Lamoignon; the sallies and insinuations flew about his ears in short, quick replies, he could not say a word, was silent as the grave and sulked, and in order to put himself forward after dinner, used the expedient of declaiming his long rhymed letter to Parisot to the edification of the others.

And so it was always, he never learned; though he was eloquent enough when he took his pen in hand after long meditations, in social repartee he was awkward and impossible. Afterwards, when he was quite alone, a thousand things might occur to him, but they simply never announced themselves when he needed them. He absolutely lacked quickness, he speaks constantly of his *bêtise*, his *gaucherie*, his *timidité*; when he is moved by anything, his head whirls, he becomes quite confused, as a rule he prefers to keep silent,

but sometimes lights upon the most horrible stupidities. We have heard how fruitless Mme. de Warens' and Mme. Mably's efforts had been to tame him and to teach him manners; dancing lessons and fencing lessons had been quite wasted on him.

His uncertainty made him bitter towards that society which demanded qualities he did not possess, and where he therefore had a position more insignificant than the one he proudly felt he deserved. But he had still not declared war on society, and he moves in it and does his best to please, because he understands that the road to the honour he thirsts after runs through this world.

But if he cannot shine by his wit and repartee when in a crowd, he takes his indemnity in tête-à-têtes, especially with women; here his rich emotional life could expand itself at will; here he could avoid the unattainable mannerisms of speech; his psychological powers of divination and his sympathy with feminine emotions teach him to read unconfessed thoughts, and his open-heartedness and confidence are all the more prized because, against the background of his stiff inaccessibility in general conversation, they have the appearance of a special favour. Mme. d'Épinay writes: ". . . It was, above all, a conversation I had with Rousseau on this walk that charmed me. My soul is still touched with tenderness at the straightforward and unusual manner in which he speaks of his sorrows."

There is no surer way to the feminine heart than through the confession of a man of mark, and Rousseau, during his life, celebrated many triumphs in this direction.

Nevertheless there were many things in the fashionable world that repelled him. It was not only his own lack of social accomplishments that made him despondent; much of what he saw about him offended and pained him; it grieved him to go, as confidant, between Mme. d'Épinay, who was now Francueil's mistress, and the betrayed wife, who never ceased to love her husband; and that cleverness and quick-wittedness that he sometimes wished to have

himself,—at the bottom of his heart he despised it all deeply, it seemed small and trivial and empty in comparison with the flaming emotions dwelling within the holy depths of nature, of life, and of the human soul,—the emotions that, at this time, were about to take possession of his wide-sweeping spirit. In reality he always felt like a stranger among these people; it seemed to him that he had come to the wrong sphere, as he expressed it later in ‘*Rêveries*.’ It is certain that he must have fled more than once from the magnificent apartments of the Touraine castle, away from all the gay self-sufficient cavaliers and ladies, to seek a deserted corner of the woods, and there come face to face with the eternal stars of heaven and his own dawning thoughts.

It is such a mood to which he gives expression, clearly enough, though imperfectly, in “*l’Allée de Sylvie*,”¹ beyond comparison the most personal of the poems that were produced at that time, indeed the only one that gives us an anticipation of the real Rousseau. Here, under the tree-tops of the *allée*, he finds himself: “. . . Oh! how my heart swells with joy—when it strays in these groves—what a pleasure I find in these shadows—how I love the silver waves of the river!—Sweet, fascinating dreams—beloved, entrancing solitude—Oh! if I could only be always under thy enchantment.—If I should cease to love thee, there would be nothing in the world to soften the misery of my sad and weary life.—Empty and restless plans for the future, fly from this happy asylum, fly from my peaceful soul.—They are always promising me happiness and wisdom,—but they never give them to me.—Oh! how easy it is for virtue and simple innocence to create happiness!—The wise man needs so little that even with the most humble lot his wishes are satisfied.—All these cares and thoughts of the future—they are less the fruits of wisdom than of ambition.

¹ Œuvres, vi. 18 ff. Silvia’s Allée is an avenue along the Char, near the Castle of Chenonceaux. The poem was written in 1746 and not 1747. Rousseau also spent the summer of 1746 at Chenonceaux, which he does not mention in ‘*Confessions*.’—See *Annales*, ii. 17 and note 3.

—He who is satisfied with necessary things, he fears not misfortune, if his heart is without passion.—O, passions, the source of pleasure.—O, passions, the source of suffering—grim tyrants, sweet seducers—without thy raging storms—without thy dangerous lures—there would be peace in all hearts.—Woe be to the contemptible ones, who in their insatiable souls foster the burning thirst for gold! . . . Woe to the ambitious ones, who in their hideous arrogance wish all creatures to submit to them! . . . Woe to the cruel ones—those whom nothing touches but their own happiness.”

We see here—more clearly and more feelingly expressed than in the rhymed letters to Parisot or Bordes, or in the “Verger des Charmettes”—the same dissension in Rousseau’s soul, the struggle between the ambition that clings to his brilliant hopes for the future, and the longing for the spiritual peace that only solitude and contentment can give. In the picture of an ideal life, which was born in his fancy under the shadows of the trees on the banks of the purling river, in the peaceful dreams, in which he flees from the din of life and his anxious thoughts for the future, we see clearly the germs of that enthusiasm for nature and rustic simplicity which he later, with glowing eloquence, was to transmit to his contemporaries. In this execration, with which he here drives away the disturbing passion (the chase for fame and money) from his soul, we have a glimpse of the great struggle which he was later to lead against all the sham values that society, to the unhappiness of humanity, had made seem so worthy of aspiration.

But, so the poem continues, there is one passion that is more dangerous than ambition or lust for power, because it comes, tender and ingratiating, bringing lures that blind even the wisest—it is love. It follows him on his wanderings under the shady trees, he cannot get rid of it, he cannot wish to rid himself of it:—

“Une langueur enchanteresse
me poursuit jusqu’en ce séjour ;
j’y veux moraliser sans cesse,
et toujours j’y songe à l’amour.”

In vain he calls on wisdom for help against this "sweet poison." But what is wisdom other than a poor illusion, a chimera, a name one gives to one's own desires.

"Thus vice lays snares for thoughtless youth,—under a false name,—under the name of philosophy.—Thus one sees the grim fanatic going the opposite way,—in eternal war with all his desires.—He sees his God in ceaseless anger—and, to please Him,—flies from joy and pleasure.

"Oh! If a real seer would come,—differing in speech,—differing still more in morals,—an enemy to the wretched seducers,—but amiable and human in his virtue—who, without going to extremes,—yet holds in honour—the pure and tender homage—every heart owes to God's greatness and beneficence."¹

This seer, whose coming Rousseau longs for, and who is to be independent of the trend of the times, is of course Rousseau himself; and thus he was to be, his face to both ways, a hand turned toward the materialists as well as toward ascetic orthodoxy; believing without denying life, speculating without denying God.

We can easily understand that a man who went about with such thoughts, so solitary and apart in the midst of the whirl, would often be overcome by disgust for the world he lived in and by a violent desire to fly from this Paris that lay prostrate before false gods. We find also outbursts of such feelings in the few letters he wrote at this time. I find the following heartfelt sigh in a letter written as early as 1745 to his creditor and friend, Daniel Roguin: ". . . I am so unutterably tired of society life and association with people, that only the desire for fame keeps me here. If I should ever have my highest wish fulfilled, that is to say, have my debts paid, no one would see me in Paris twenty-four hours afterwards."²

And in 1749 he sends a young (unnamed) nobleman a hearty congratulation, because he had withdrawn from

¹ Cf. Duclos, p. 163 ff.

² Œuvres, x. 51.

society and a worldly life. "When a man twenty-two years old, gallant, amiable, cultured, and brilliant as you are, and who has, in no way, been disowned by fate, decides to withdraw from the world voluntarily and without having been provoked to it by misfortune in his business or his pleasures, one can feel sure that such a precious result of reason and meditation will be followed neither by loathing nor remorse. In this conviction, I shall send you a compliment, which many will not repeat; I congratulate you . . . I will tell you sincerely that I have often regretted that such a straightforward spirit and such a beautiful soul as yours should have been created only for flirtations, card-playing and champagne; my dear friend, you were born for something better; the passionate but refined taste which drove you to distractions soon disclosed to you their flat insipidity; you will learn with surprise that the simplest and most modest joys are just as attractive and just as intense. You now understand human beings, and you do not need to know so much of them in order to despise them."

We see that we are approaching that Rousseau whom we all involuntarily picture to ourselves when his name is mentioned.

Although Rousseau in these years was very much occupied with his work as secretary and his participation in fashionable life, nevertheless there was no break or check in his intellectual development, which had been begun in Savoy and continued later in Venice; his intellect was just as wide-awake, his thirst for knowledge just as unquenched as ever, and he was unceasingly making investigations in new spheres of thought. Francueil was keenly interested in chemistry, and he had really engaged Rousseau as secretary in order to secure his help in getting out a chemical work. "And we soiled as much paper as we could in the cause of this science, whose elements we scarcely understood." It was not a little paper that Rousseau soiled on this occasion; the industrious Rousseau-biographer, Dufour,

has found a voluminous treatise of twelve hundred and three manuscript pages, entitled 'Institutions Chymiques.' The work is of course without scientific value now, and has probably never had any, but a certain part is of interest because it throws light on his religious ideas.

'Les Institutions Chymiques' was written in 1747, and its religious thought is of the same nature as "l'Allée de Sylvie" from the year before; it points back to Rousseau's silent worship on his walks between Charmettes and Chambéry, as well as to his "prayer" of 1738, and it points forward to the "Savoyard Vicar's Creed." He shows the same heartfelt conviction of God's existence and the same hostile attitude toward atheists:—

"A thinking creature is the active principle behind everything; we must have parted with all sound sense to doubt it, and it is a pure waste of time to try to prove such an obvious truth. . . .

" . . . The heavenly bodies move, we do not know how, nor in accordance with what principles; the sun every day sends us its health-giving rays in order to maintain life and movement on earth; without it, everything in nature would perish; but neither the sun nor all the stars nor fire nor all movement that exists is capable of producing the smallest plant or the most insignificant insect; the abyss of creation in which philosophers have so often gone astray is to this day the despair of the disbelievers; a body-structure, organised by the laws of movement alone, is a chimera which one must leave to those who are satisfied with words."

However obscure and insignificant these words may appear from a scientific or philosophical point of view, their religious value and direction are clear enough.

We find similar thoughts in a letter to his good friend Altuna a year afterwards. Altuna was a zealous Catholic, and had evidently endeavoured to convert his friend; but Rousseau was just as far from revealed orthodoxy as from the atheism of the philosophers; he does not build his belief

in a superhuman God on tradition, but on a number of logical conclusions. . . . You know my opinions;—they are unchangeable, because they are built on evidence and proof, which are the only foundations to build upon, whatever creed one follows. Although my faith certainly teaches me many things that are beyond my reason, nevertheless it is first of all my reason that has forced me to submit to my faith. . . . However, I ask you to have such a good opinion of your friend's mind and heart that you will understand that he has thought over these things more than once, and that his morals, in principle if not in action, do not stand behind yours and are no less gratifying to God. The most dreadful sufferings and the near presence of death have only strengthened me in my conviction and in the consoling hope of an eternal happiness, which I hope to share with you, in the lap of my Maker."

Rousseau had met Diderot even before he went to Venice, but no intimacy had arisen between them. Now they came more in contact and were soon inseparable; they even started a critical newspaper together, '*le Persifleur*.' However, only one number appeared, and it was composed by Rousseau in such a loquaciously prolix style that one cannot particularly complain that there was no continuation.

Condillac soon joined these two, and the three friends met once a week to dine together at the *Hôtel du Panier fleuri*, and we can be sure they were animated dinners; even Diderot, who was never in time even for a rendezvous, on these occasions came on the stroke of the hour. Both Condillac and Diderot were about the same age as Rousseau, the one two years, the other one year younger, and like him, they stood on the threshold of their fame, ready to blossom forth. Condillac was about to publish (1746) his '*Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines*,' and the next year Diderot's '*Pensées philosophiques*,' and, shortly after, '*Lettre sur les aveugles*,' which were to cause so much disturbance, appeared.

We do not know what the young thinkers talked about

at these dinners, but we can guess that all the questions that were in the air at that time were subjects of the most spirited discussions.

In all probability, Diderot was the most learned man in France; there were no limits to his intellectual curiosity; he was not content, as most of the French philosophers were, with studying the more accessible Locke, but entered thoroughly into Leibnitz' difficult labyrinth of thought; he mastered natural science, the history of music, æsthetics, mathematics; as is well known, he not only wrote philosophical treatises, but broke new ground in drama and romance, dashed off innumerable short stories, was the most important critic of the day, not only in literature and drama but also in art, and was the chief compiler of the great encyclopedia; he was not satisfied with writing only for his own account, but gave great assistance to others in writing their books. And yet this all-embracing written production was, in a way, only the remains of his oral performances,—an evening hour's effusion, on paper, of all that he had not been able to deliver himself of during the day; he was an inveterate causeur, squandered, in ceaseless restlessness, his wit, his thought, his sudden conceits and paradoxes; an untiring improviser, an intellectual spendthrift who squandered his treasures without thinking of property rights, without temptation to miserliness or concentration.

Condillac was quite a different character, a quiet thinker who never took part in polemical discussions, perhaps the most typical representative of what one generally thinks of as French rationalism of the eighteenth century, without any particular sense of reality, a pronounced arguer, analyser, philosophical mathematician, an infallible logician, who never left out a link in or admitted an irrelevant link into his close chain of reasoning.

One can easily imagine what a flood of fruitful inspiration, especially from Diderot, streamed out over Rousseau at these dinners in Panier fleuri, enriching the soul which was already in a state of violent fermentation.

Among the questions which were discussed between them, certainly philosophical and religious ones stood first. Diderot, in '*Pensées philosophiques*,' with its "expansion of the God-concept," was already well on the way to eliminate God entirely, and in '*Lettre sur les aveugles*' he had approached very near to the pure atheism to which he afterwards confessed.¹ It is true Condillac was not concerned with declaring himself either atheist or materialist,² but neither was there any particular place for God in his powerful chain of reasoning.

As to whether or in what manner Rousseau protested against his radical friends, we know nothing; when we remember what attitude he took on later occasions toward these questions, we must think it is highly probable that he did not listen in silence to Diderot's challenging opinions; and under any circumstances, it is certain that he did not let himself be converted, as we have seen clearly enough in the above-quoted documents. The radicalism of his friends gave him new food for reflection and only strengthened him in his religious convictions; toward his philosophical friends, as toward Altuna, he insists upon his "sentiments invariables," and he becomes more and more fortified in his strongly marked emotional Deism, which—aside from its justification or his ground for belief in it—was to become later the firmest stronghold in his isolated position between traditional orthodoxy on the one side and materialistic philosophy on the other.

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We see how most of the elements which constitute Rousseau's peculiar temperament are collecting and condensing themselves during these years in Paris (1745-49). The bitterness over his shameful treatment in Venice is not forgotten: it lies latent, a personal grudge which gives his democratic feelings a greater intensity; the struggle between his ambition and his "wisdom" is about to be terminated by

¹ Cf. Louis Ducros: Diderot, (Paris 1894), p. 312.

² Cf. Lanson: Hist. de la litt. fr. (1906), p. 727.

"wisdom's" triumph; the brilliant world he lives in no longer blinds him, he sees through it, is sometimes violently repelled by it, longs for nature and sincerity; his religious point of view becomes clear and confirmed, numerous old experiences rise in his memory and acquire a new significance in the new view of life he is about to form for himself. A great deal of all this lies still obscure and chaotic in his subconsciousness, but it rises and rises almost daily, approaching nearer and nearer to the threshold of consciousness. It needs only a little breath to bring about the awakening.

However, there is still one more vital experience that we must examine, an experience so important that I have heretofore passed over it in order to treat it in a chapter by itself.

XVII.

THERÈSE LEVASSEUR.

WHEN Rousseau came back from Venice he went once more to his old hotel near the Sorbonne. "Here awaited me the only consolation that heaven has been pleased to grant me in my misery, and which is the only thing that makes life tolerable for me. . . . We got a new housekeeper from Orleans. She engaged a girl from her native town to look after the linen ; she was twenty-three or twenty-four years old, and, like the housekeeper, ate with us. She was named Therèse Levasseur. . . . The first time she appeared at table I was struck by her modest manner, and still more by her lively glance, which I thought I had never seen equalled. The guests consisted of M. Bonnefond, several Irish and Gascon abbés, and other people of the same sort. . . . They teased the little one, I defended her, and then they turned their gibes on me. Even if I had not directly felt any inclination for the poor girl, sympathy and opposition would have given it to me. . . . I became her acknowledged champion. I saw that she was sensible of my protection, and her glances, which were animated by the gratitude which she did not dare express in words, became all the more penetrating.

"She was very timid, and so was I. But in spite of this similarity in nature, which would seem to tend to keep us apart, our relations were formed very quickly. The housekeeper, who noticed it, became furious, and her brutality only helped to increase my success with the little one, who

now had no other support in the house except myself; she saw me leave the house with sorrow, and longed for the return of her protector. The sympathy of our hearts, the congeniality of our natures, soon had the usual effect. She thought she had found in me an honest man, and she was not mistaken. I thought to see in her a sensitive, innocent girl, without coquetry, and I was not mistaken. I told her in advance that I would never abandon her nor would I ever marry her. Love, esteem, and naïve sincerity were the ministers of my triumph, and because her heart was tender and honest I attained my happiness without being importunate.

“At first I had only sought an amusement; I saw that I had obtained more—a life-companion. After a short association with this excellent girl, and a little reflection over my situation, I found that in thinking only of my pleasure I had done much for my happiness. In the place of my extinguished ambition, I needed a living sentiment to fill my heart. I needed—to speak openly—a successor to ‘Maman’; since I could no longer live with her, I needed one to live with her pupil and one in whom I might find the simplicity and docility of heart which she had found in me. It was a necessity for me that I should have the sweetness of private and domestic life to compensate me for the brilliant fate which I was about to relinquish. When I was absolutely alone, my heart was empty, I needed only one to fill it. Fate had deprived me of, at least had alienated me from, that for which nature had intended me. From that time I was alone, since, for me, there never was an intermediate between all and nothing. In Thérèse I found what I needed, and by her help I lived as happily as it was possible under the circumstances.”

Thus Rousseau describes in the seventh book of ‘Confessions’ his meeting with Thérèse and the manner in which the relationship between them originated and developed. Generally speaking, one can put confidence in his account; there is nothing to hinder our believing that it happened this way in all essentials. Nevertheless we must make one

observation ; when he mentions love in addition to sympathy and respect this is scarcely correct. Rousseau was never in love with Therèse, still less so than with Mme. de Warens. The final impression of his story is that his feelings for her were composed of quite other elements than love, and in another place in 'Confessions' (book ix.) he declares as positively as possible that love had nothing to do with his long faithfulness to Therèse. It is when he introduces the story of the great and only love of his life, his infatuation for Mme. de Houdetot. After having once more given an account of his relations with Therèse and his persevering staunchness toward her, he exclaims : "What will the reader then think when I swear . . . that I from the first moment I saw her until this very day have never felt the least spark of love for her, that I have wanted to possess her as little as I did Mme. de Warens, and that the sexual needs which she satisfied in me were exclusively those of sex, without having the least individual character as far as I was concerned?"

This is undoubtedly the truth ; Rousseau was gradually drawn into this relationship ; he was sick and needed nursing, he was lonely and needed company. Therèse crossed his path, she attracted him by the natural simplicity of her heart, she was ill-treated and he defended her. That is the way it came about, and soon she was indispensable to him.

In the beginning Rousseau was embarrassed by her lack of culture, and tried to correct it. "At first I wanted to form her mind, but it was not worth the trouble ; her mind is as nature created it, culture and training have no part in it. I do not blush to confess that she never learned to read correctly, although she writes passably.¹ There was opposite my windows a clock by which I tried for over a month to teach her to tell time ; she can scarcely do it yet. She has

¹ A number of her written exhibitions are preserved, and have been printed by Rousseau's biographers ; as a matter of fact, it takes a good deal of acumen to decipher her fantastic spelling.

never been able to follow the course of the twelve months of the year, and she does not know a single figure in spite of all the trouble I have taken to teach her. She can neither count money nor calculate the price of anything. When she talks she often finds the word that is just the opposite of the one she is trying to say."

Of course there is no question of any intellectual companionship or interchange of thoughts with this woman; but she had other qualities that were useful to her friend—a sense of reality, instinct, presence of mind; "this limited—if you will—silly creature, could give excellent advice in difficult cases. In Switzerland, in England, in France, when confronted by problems, she has often seen what I did not see, and has given me hints which were always of advantage to me to follow; she has saved me from dangers into which I was blindly plunging; when with ladies of highest rank, great men and princes, her feeling, her sound sense, her conversation, her entire behaviour, have awakened general respect, and many have complimented me on this account, and I have felt convinced of their sincerity."

In many passages in 'Confessions' as well as in his letters Rousseau speaks of Therèse with the warmest appreciation, he praises her good heart, her faithful care—she was an angel; he lived with her just as happily as with "*le plus beau génie de l'univers*," and similar expressions.

On the other hand, later authors have often painted poor Therèse in the blackest colours; this criticism began very early; ten years after Rousseau's death, while Therèse was still living, Mme. de Staël wrote in her '*Lettres sur les ouvrages et le caractère de J. J. Rousseau*':¹ "This unworthy woman, who spent her life with him, had learned to know him sufficiently to make him unhappy." And in a note she accuses Therèse of having caused Rousseau's suicide (which Mme. de Staël believed in) by her unfaithfulness.

Such opinions of her also occur in Count Barruel's

¹ Sixth Letter, *Œuvres de Mme. de Staël* (Paris, 1820), i. 82 and 83.

Rousseau-biography of the same year (1789). When 'Confessions' was published in 1782 "for the benefit of his widow," the Count exclaims indignantly, "Is one obliged to procure food for snakes? No—to give them permission to live is an act of cruelty."¹

Mme. de Staël and Barruel have had many followers down to our own day; a number of Rousseau's biographers have represented Therèse as an outcast of the human race, and the more enthusiastic the authors have been for Rousseau the more has his poor life-companion suffered. She was the dark spot in his life, the real cause of his unhappiness, she brought gossip to the house and ruined the relation between Rousseau and his friends; she was constantly complaining of his poverty, received gifts behind his back and against his positive orders, filled the house with her greedy family, who often embittered Rousseau's life.

Of all these accusations it is only the last that can be given any credence; besides, on all important points, one must give the preference of belief to Rousseau himself, who calls her his life's consolation, and we must acknowledge that Bockerhoff was right in saying that "he probably knew best how to value what concerned himself so personally."

From other quarters Rousseau too has been attacked on account of this relation; many dark observations have been made over his vulgar soul, his common taste and plebeian inclinations, his lack of morality.

As far as morality is concerned, it is true enough that Rousseau lived for more than twenty years with Therèse without marrying her, and when he finally did take this step it was in a form that did not satisfy strict demands for the legality of marriage. But nothing was more common in that day; we have heard how there was hardly a man of the upper class who did not keep a mistress quite openly. On the contrary, Rousseau's candour and chivalrousness in this relationship were almost unprecedented. From the very be-

¹ Barruel: *La vie de Rousseau*, précédée de quelques lettres relatives au même sujet (Londres, 1789), p. 132. Cit. in *Annales*, i. 70.

ginning he assured her that he did not intend to marry her, and she made no objections. Notwithstanding the fact that the connection was founded on such a weak basis, he held out faithfully until his death, more than thirty years ; there may have been moments in the course of life when he wished himself free from this bond, but he took it as his duty, and bent his wishes under its command. In his relations with Thérèse he was unselfish and self-sacrificing, satisfied her wishes even when it was difficult, was good and considerate to her in daily life, thought of her future with solicitude, did his best for her in his will, and commended her welfare most earnestly to his friends. In respect to morals, Rousseau had nothing with which to chide himself in this connection ; on the contrary, if one considers the surroundings in which he lived, one must rather say that he towered far above the average moral level.

However, we must take another point of view in passing judgment on the degradation to which Rousseau submitted, in intellectual, æsthetic, and social respects, when he joined his life to such a coarse and absolutely uncultured creature as Thérèse.

Naturally the union of Rousseau and Thérèse was no ideal marriage, and when he is not speaking directly of her, he betrays, here and there, that he suffered under her thoughtlessness and complete lack of intellectual interest. "I recognise in the two sexes," he says in '*Émile*,' "only two classes that really differ from each other—those that think and those that do not think ; and this difference is due almost exclusively to education. A man of the one class should not marry into the other, for he will miss the greatest charm there is in companionship, when he, although he has a wife, finds himself reduced to thinking alone." And in another place he says, "It is, above all, in solitude that one feels the charm of living with one who can think."

It was this "charm" that Rousseau renounced ; but when all is told, it is doubtful whether he felt the loss very deeply. In another place he complains of the burdensome-

ness of associating with women who have intellectual interests, and he says expressly somewhere that "an intellectual woman is her husband's scourge." He was probably like many other thinkers who when at home prefer to work undisturbed and without interruption, and like their wives to be housekeepers and nurses who arrange the practical side of life with the least possible inconvenience. Of course, to arrange one's self in this practical way is not anything to be particularly proud of, but neither does it necessarily mean that there has been any degradation, and under any circumstances no one will try to maintain that Rousseau's family life with Therèse had any degenerating influence on his intelligence; all of his masterpieces appeared after his union with her, and he himself says that he worked with much more energy after she had brought order into his domestic affairs.

On the other hand, it is certainly conceivable that Therèse did not have any beneficial influence on his æsthetic and social refinement, and that she contributed to vulgarising his tastes to a certain extent, in a way similar to Mathilde's influence on Heine.¹ Rousseau was never a thoroughly refined man; when one reads 'Confessions'² one is every moment painfully impressed by his manner of thought and expression, likewise in 'La Nouvelle Héloïse.' But even if one acknowledges that a man cannot live unharmed day in and day out in intimacy with a silly and vulgar female, nevertheless it would be unreasonable to give his "degrading connection" the chief blame for this lack of delicacy. We need only look back over the irregular and casual circumstances of the course of his life and ask ourselves whether it were possible for a thoroughly harmonised creature of culture to spring from this vagabond existence. One is surprised rather that

¹ See Legras, Henri Heine, Poète (Paris, 1897), p. 177 ff.

² I name, *instar omnium*, as an example, the lack of taste he displays in the 7th book when he refers to Therèse's first pregnancy: "Tandis que j'engraissais à Chenonceaux, ma pauvre Therèse engraissait à Paris d'une autre manière; et quand j'y revins, je trouvai l'ouvrage que j'avais mis sur le chantier plus avancé que je ne l'avais cru."

he reached as far as he did in his struggle for perfection; but that Therèse was no help to him, rather a hindrance in his development, is more than probable.

Likewise Therèse certainly helped not only to isolate him from good society, but also to interfere with his relations with his friends. She could not have been especially attractive company for them, and, in addition to this, by her suspicion and love of gossip she sowed dissension where a noble and high-thinking woman would have helped to smooth things over.

However, all this did not prevent his being as "happy as circumstances permitted" in his union with Therèse, and so it is quite incorrect to speak of degradation. The relation, especially in the beginning, was almost exclusively beneficial, and what interests us most for the moment is that it helped him to find himself, it was one of the more important elements in his advance towards independence and self-appreciation.

Therèse was a daughter of the people, and he found in her—either rightly or wrongly—a contrast to that Paris and that fashionable world which he, for more or less deep-lying, more or less noble reasons, had begun to see through and hate. She had neither information nor intellect, neither wit nor elegance, but instead she had goodness, naturalness, innocence of heart, the transparency of a primitive nature. With her he did not need to exert himself or to be on the watch, he could feel his superiority without being embarrassed by the social forms that were always a burden to him. She was for him a bit of nature in the heart of Paris, and a bit of rustic life where he could take refuge and find some of those primitive joys for which he longed. She confirmed his democratic feelings, his conviction that the true human values are not to be found in the great world, but in people who are untouched by luxuries and vanity of spirit; in her he had a living proof that no art or science is needed to "purify morals." On the contrary.

In the meantime, an unpleasant shadow was to fall over the union of Rousseau and Therèse. When he returned

from Chenonceaux in 1746, Therèse was pregnant, and a short time afterwards her first child was born. Under the circumstances in which Rousseau lived, this was an extremely embarrassing addition; but he extricated himself from the difficulty in a very easy manner—he had his child sent to a foundling hospital and was thereby rid of it. “I decided very cheerfully (*gaillardement*) without the least scruple; the only ones I had to overcome were those of Therèse, whom I had the greatest difficulty in persuading to agree to this, the only means of saving her honour.” This repeated itself four times in the course of the following years, and Rousseau fulfilled his paternal duties in the same convenient way every time: he sent all of his five children to the foundling hospital.

This is the darkest spot in Rousseau’s life, and it has been very difficult for his admirers to forget it. Women especially have been very reluctant to believe it possible that their hero should have been guilty of an act which offends their most holy instincts in such an unpleasant way. Mme. de Staël, in defiance of Rousseau’s own words, tries to put all the blame on Therèse, “cette indigne femme.” George Sand thought that she could acquit him by assuming that the children were not his, but the fruit of Therèse’s unfaithfulness; she hints that there was a tradition in her family (Dupin) that Rousseau was impotent, and she conceives the possibility that he took the blame on himself from chivalrousness. Finally, Frederica Macdonald has recently tried to spirit away all five children; she says Rousseau did not put his children in the foundling asylum, simply because there were no children to put there; they were all fabrications of Therèse; every time she became afraid that Rousseau would leave her, she invented a sham confinement-bed in order to bind him more closely to her. She played this rôle five times, and every time the innocent, credulous Rousseau allowed himself to be duped. She also backs up her statement with the belief in Rousseau’s impotence, this time with the approval of a medical authority. Mrs Macdonald’s

feminine logic does not discover at all that her marvellous theory does not improve Rousseau's case in the least, as the cruelty of his heart would be exactly the same whether he abandoned children that existed in reality or only in his own imagination. I have quoted these attempts to deny the fact itself chiefly for curiosity's sake; there is certainly no doubt that Rousseau was guilty of the act; he refers to it again and again in 'Confessions,' in 'Émile,' in 'Rêveries,' indeed even in letters that are contemporaneous with the act, and every time in words that exclude the possibility of Thérèse's being the real culprit in any way whatever.

Most biographers have judged him guilty also, and, as a rule, find no extenuating circumstances; they have not hesitated to use such an expression as "revolting inhumanity." I do not deny that I find the general sentence too strict and too unconditional.

Many seem to think that this heartlessness is much worse in him than in many other people, on account of the glaring contrast between his life and his teachings, between all his beautiful words about paternal duty and this boundless egoistical irresponsibility. But to this we can reply that if the history of intellectual men were to be written from this point of view, many frailties would certainly be disclosed, especially if one had such sources to draw from as 'Confessions.' Most people are inferior to their own ideals. And besides, one must not forget that Rousseau's beautiful theories had not yet taken root in his soul; they did not appear until later, and are, for the most part, the fruit of his remorse over this reprehensible neglect.

Quite aside from this, it is unfair to judge a man without taking account of the environment in which he lives and the personal circumstances under which he commits the offence.

In the passage in which he confesses the first abandonment, he writes as follows: ". . . I continued to eat at Mme. de Selle's. I heard there a number of anecdotes and I took advantage little by little, fortunately not of the morals,

but of the maxims that I heard proclaimed about me. Well-bred ladies, who had got into trouble, betrayed husbands, seduced women, births that had taken place in concealment, — these were the general topics of conversation, and it seemed that the one who was cleverest at populating the foundling asylum was considered the greatest success. This influenced me, I formed my opinions after what I saw was the prevailing rule with men who were not only very amiable but, in reality, also honourable, and I said to myself: Since this is the custom of the country, one can certainly follow it, as long as one lives here. . . ."

This is certainly a true and faithful description, and contains no exaggerations. At that time, even legitimate children were not looked after particularly; as a rule, they were sent immediately after birth to a peasant family, where they remained until their fifth year; thereafter, girls were sent to cloisters and boys to the Jesuit college. Under Louis XV. absolutely no duty toward illegitimate children was recognised. Louis XIV. did legitimatise his posterity with different mothers; the children that were born in the Parc de Cerfs were sent to the foundling asylum.¹

Mme. de Tencin's case is well-known: she had a child by Le Camus Destouches, and one day it was found lying on the steps of Saint-Jean-le-Rond; it became later the famous writer and mathematician, d'Alembert, who never received any support from nor had anything to do with his distinguished mother.

It appears to me, on the whole, that in pronouncing judgment on Rousseau, one has not sufficiently emphasised the fact that his children were illegitimate. As far as true morals are concerned, of course, this is no extenuating circumstance; but if we take life as it is, in all its frailty, we find no cause for judging Rousseau any more strictly than others, simply because he in his 'Confessions' has initiated the whole world into his sins. Not only in France under Louis XV., but also in our own days and in many countries,

¹ Macdonald, i. 155, note 1.

we might find considerable food for reflection on this subject, which would make us less confident in our judgments.

It is safe to say then that Rousseau, in sending his children away from him, was no worse than many others both in the past and in the present. Of course this is no justification, but it is sufficient to prove that, at any rate, he was not the abnormal monster that many have represented him to be.

There is some excuse also in the circumstances under which Rousseau had to face his paternal duties. He was as poor as a church mouse, with nine hundred francs a-year on which to support himself and Thérèse and her family partly; it was difficult enough, it was really almost an impossibility for him to increase his expenses by undertaking to support a child. He was also justified in that the people with whom he was living were not exactly fitted to be trainers of children; and finally, we must not forget that Rousseau just at this time was undergoing the most violent intellectual fermentation, which explains the fact that his natural instincts were subjected to more or less repression.

It is certainly not correct to assert that 'Émile,' or Rousseau's opinions on education were exclusively the fruit of his remorse over his own neglect; we have indeed seen that he had already formed several of his pedagogical theories when he wrote his plan for the education of the young De Mably in 1741; but there is scarcely any doubt that this remorse helped to cause him to brood more and more over these questions. And under any circumstances it is, at any rate, a fact that he did write 'Émile'—that epoch-making work which has been described, quite justly, as the first effective "déclaration des droits de l'enfant." If he neglected his own five children, he made amends by evolving and diffusing thoughts that have benefited thousands and thousands of other children. He was one of a numerous company when he put his children among "Les Enfants trouvés," but he was quite alone in giving the children of the whole world the uplift they received through his pedagogical revolution.

Neither can this counterbalance his sin or wholly justify him; but it must be counted as an important item on the credit side.

In April 1751, Rousseau wrote a long letter about his children to Mme. de Francueil, a letter which interests us so much in many respects that I will quote the most important part of it—

“ . . . Yes, madame, I have sent my children to ‘*Les Enfants trouvés*.’ I have transferred their support to that institution which is arranged for it. If my poverty and my illness prevent my assuming such a dear obligation, it is a misfortune which one must pity me for and not a crime of which to accuse me. I owe them support, and I have secured this for them better or at least more surely than I could have given it to them myself: this is the most important point. Next comes consideration of their mother, who must not be disgraced.

“ You know my circumstances. I barely earn my bread from day to day; how, then, should I be able to support a family in addition? And if I should again be forced to resume my literary activity, how could I find the necessary quiet in my den to complete a productive work if I were disturbed by domestic cares and the noise of children? The writings which hunger dictates do not bring in much. I would then have to resort to patronage, intrigues, and artifices to secure me some wretched position or other, and maintain it by the usual means, . . . in short, enter upon all that infamy which fills me with justifiable terror. Support myself, my children, and their mother upon the blood of the unhappy! No, madame, it is better that they be without parents than that they should have a scoundrel for a father.

“ Bowed down under a painful and fatal disease, I cannot hope for a long life; even if I, as long as I live, could support these unhappy ones, who are destined to suffer in the future, it would be to pay dear for the advantage of being better kept for a time than they are now. . . .

“Why do you not marry? you will say. Ask your unjust laws, madame. It did not suit me to form an indissoluble bond, and no one will ever convince me that duty demands it. At any rate it is certain that I have not done it, and do not intend to do it. One should not have children if one cannot support them. Pardon me, madame, nature demands that we have children, since the earth produces enough to support all; but it is the rich people, it is your class, that steals the bread from my children. Nature demands also that we provide for their support, and it is just that that I have done. If there had not existed an asylum for them I would have done my duty, and rather have died of hunger than let them do so.

“The name ‘*Enfants trouvés*’ frightens you, just as if one found these children on the street left to perish unless chance should rescue them. Be assured that you yourself could not have greater contempt than I for the unworthy father who would stoop to such barbarity; it is too foreign to my heart for me even to defend myself. . . . I know well enough that these children will not be brought up delicately; all the better for them, they will become that much stronger; they get nothing superfluous, only what is necessary. They do not make gentlemen of them, but peasants and workmen. I see nothing in this education that I myself would not choose for my children. If I were bringing them up I would not prepare them for diseases by giving them effeminate training. . . . They should not learn to dance and to ride, but they should have strong, untiring legs. I would make neither authors nor clerks of them; I would not force them to practise the use of the pen, but of the plow, the file, the hammer,—means to leading a healthful, industrious, and innocent life. . . . It is that for which they are intended; with the peasant training that they are receiving they will be happier than their father.

“I am deprived of the pleasure of seeing them; I have never tasted the joy of a fatherly kiss. Alas! as I say, I do not complain; I deliver them from poverty at my own

expense. Thus Plato wished all children to be brought up in his republic; that all of them should be unknown to their fathers, but should be the children of the State. But this education is vulgar and low! Yes, it is in this that the real great crime lies, that makes such an impression on you and on all others; always bound by the worldly prejudices, you look upon that that is only the disgrace of poverty as the disgrace of vice."

It is true this letter was not written until 1751, a year after he had published his first 'Discours,' and his awakening had then taken place. But with the exception of the remarks about Plato's 'Republic,' it might have been written before, and it undoubtedly reflects moods that were just as strong in him already at the time of the birth of the first child at the end of the 'Forties. If we compare this with the letter to Mme. de Besenval (Nov. 1744), which I have already quoted (p. 218), we find very closely-allied opinions. Then—it was after his diplomatic defeat in Venice—it was the rights of the nobility and inherited privileges of which he had been the victim, and his indignation turned with bitterness against the morality that has two sorts of justice—one mild and all-forgiving for the strong and distinguished, a cruel one for the weak and unprotected. In writing to Mme. de Francueil, it was wealth especially, and the unfair distribution of the good things of life, that had to bear the brunt of his anger. In both cases we find the same inclination to draw conclusions from his own experience, to identify his own case with social conditions; if there is any fault he is sure that it is, at any rate, not his,—he is the innocent victim of social conditions that are in the most unreasonable opposition to all sound sense and natural feeling of justice.

In this way also his connection with Thérèse and its consequences served still more to emphasise his democratic feelings, to lay stress on his solitude and his opposition to society and its laws.

XVIII.

THE AWAKENING.

IN the fall of 1749 came the awakening.

I shall first set forth those documents on which we can base our surmises as to what took place at that time in Rousseau's soul ; they come partly from him, partly from others. From Rousseau himself we have three accounts of the crisis ; unfortunately none of these is contemporaneous with the event nor written anywhere near its date ; in his letters during the 'Fifties there is no passage that refers to the crisis ; the first reference appears in the second of his famous letters to Malesherbes, which is dated January 12, 1762, that is to say about twelve and a half years after the experience.

In its entirety it runs thus :—

“ . . . After having thus passed forty years of my life dissatisfied with myself and with others, I tried in vain to break the chains that kept me bound to a society which I respected so little, and which tied me to occupations quite against my taste, on account of demands which at that time I considered those of nature, but which were only those of opinion ; but suddenly a happy occurrence took place,—one that taught me what I must do for myself, and what I must think of my fellow-creatures, on account of whom my heart was in constant opposition to my intelligence, and whom I always felt drawn to love, although I had so many reasons for hating them. I wish that I could describe to you this moment which in such a marvellous way became an epoch

in my life, and which will always be present with me though I should live for ever.

"I was on my way to visit Diderot, who was at that time imprisoned in Vincennes; I had with me a copy of the 'Mercure de France,' which I looked through as I walked. My eye fell on the subject for which the Academy of Dijon offered a prize, and this became the occasion that led to my first production. If ever anything has resembled an inspiration, it was the emotion that filled me when I read this. I felt as though my spirit were suddenly illuminated by a thousand lights; crowds of living thoughts forced themselves suddenly upon me with a strength and a confusion that threw me into an unspeakable disquietude; my head was seized with a dizziness as in intoxication. A violent beating of the heart alarmed me and made my breast rise; I could no longer breathe while I walked, and I sank down under one of the trees in the avenue, and there I passed a half hour in such excitement that when I rose I discovered that the whole front of my vest was wet through with my tears, although I had not been aware that I had wept. Oh, if I could have written down a fourth part of what I saw and felt under that tree, with what clearness I could have proven all the contradictions of the social order, with what power I could have represented all our misuse of institutions, with what conclusiveness I could have demonstrated that man is good by nature, and it is only through institutions that he becomes evil! All that I could retain of the many great truths that in the course of a quarter of an hour inspired me under that tree is to be found, though much weakened, scattered about in the three most important of my writings, namely, the discourses on the sciences, on inequality and on education; these three works are inseparable and constitute a whole. All the rest disappeared; nothing was written down on the spot except the speech of Fabricius."

Thus runs the account in the second letter to Malesherbes.

In the eighth book of 'Confessions,' after having told of Diderot's imprisonment and loneliness in Vincennes, he writes:—

"The summer of 1749¹ was violently hot. It is two miles from Paris to Vincennes. I walked very fast in order to arrive as early as possible. The trees of the highroad which, according to the custom of the country, were clipped very short, gave almost no shade, and I often lay down upon the earth when overcome by heat and fatigue I was not able to go further. In order to keep myself from walking so fast, I had decided to take a book or two with me. One day I took the 'Mercure de France,' and while I was walking reading in it, my glance fell on the following question, proposed by the Academy of Dijon as the prize-subject for the following year: 'Whether the progress of the sciences and the arts has helped to corrupt or to elevate morals.'

"As I read these words, I saw another world before my eyes, and I became another man. Although I have a very lively remembrance of the impression I received, the details passed out of my mind from the moment I wrote them down in one of my four letters to Malesherbes. This is one of the peculiarities of my memory that should be noticed. As long as I depend on it, it is good, but as soon as I confide anything to paper it leaves me; I never remember anything of what I have written.

"What I remember most decidedly in regard to this occasion is, that when I arrived at Vincennes I was in a state of excitement bordering on fever (*délire*). Diderot noticed it; I told him the cause, and read to him the speech of Fabricius, which I had written in pencil under a tree. He encouraged me to give wing to my ideas ('donner l'essor à mes idées') and compete for the prize."

¹ Ducros points out that Rousseau was mistaken when he speaks of the summer, as the Dijon prize was advertised for the first time in the October number of 'Mercure'; but it can certainly be pretty hot in Paris even in the beginning of October.

Finally, there is a third place where Rousseau, in more ordinary terms, describes the course and effects of his marvellous experience. It is the second of his dialogues ("Rousseau juge de Jean Jacques") :—

"From his youth he had often asked himself why all men were not good, honest and happy, for which they seemed to him to have been created ; he searched his heart to discover what was the hindrance that prevented this, but he found no answer. . . . At the same time that he admired the progress of human intelligence, he wondered at seeing social miseries increase at equal rate. He divined a secret opposition between the constitution of man and the order of society ; but it was more an indefinite feeling ('un sentiment sourd'), an obscure notion ('une notion confuse') than a clear and logical judgment. Public opinion had bent him too much to its will to him to dare to protest against such unanimous decisions.

"A miserable academic prize-question which he read in a number of 'Mercure' suddenly opened his eyes, brought order into the chaos in his mind, revealed a new world to him, a true golden age, a society made up of natural, wise, happy creatures, and brought him the hope of realising all his visions, by destroying all the prejudices to which he himself had formerly been subjected, but in which he at that moment believed that he saw the origin of all the vices and miseries of mankind. From the living flame which was lighted in his soul, sprang all the sparks of genius which have been seen to glisten in his writings in the course of ten years' delirium and fever, but which before this had shown no signs of themselves, and which probably would never have glistened again if he, when this attack was over, had continued to write. Kindled by the consideration of these great ideals, they were always present in his mind. And when he compared them with reality, they presented themselves to him every day in a quite new light. The absurd hope of finally seeing reason and truth triumph over prejudice and lies inspired his heart, which was inflamed by the thought of mankind's future happiness

and by the honour of contributing to it, with words that were worthy of such a great mission. . . ."

Thus runs Rousseau's own account of the "conversion." But as we have said, there are also others who have something to say.

Marmontel, in the seventh book of his memoirs (after a quotation from Rousseau's account in the letter to Malesherbes), writes:—

"This is what one can call an ecstasy eloquently described. But hear how the affair really took place in all its simplicity, as Diderot told it to me and as I retold it to Voltaire. 'I sat imprisoned (it is Diderot speaking) in Vincennes. Rousseau came to visit me; he had at that time selected me as his Aristarch, as he himself said. One day as we were walking together, he told me that the Academy of Dijon had proposed an interesting prize-question, and that he wished to treat it; this question was: Has the re-establishment of the sciences and the arts helped to elevate morals? ¹ What point of view will you take?' I asked.—He replied: 'I will answer yes ("le parti de l'affirmative").' . . . 'That would be the "asses' bridge,'" said I; 'all mediocre talents will take that road, and there you will find nothing more than ordinary thoughts. On the other hand, the opposite point of view offers both philosophy and eloquence a new field, one that is rich and fruitful.' 'You are right,' he said, after having thought over it a little; 'I will follow your advice.'"

La Harpe tells the same story in nearly the same words; he probably got it from Marmontel, so there is no reason for repeating it. But Volney has developed a little legend from this kernel; he relates the following in a note to his 'Tableau du Climat et du sol des États-Unis d'Amérique: ²

"What I am reporting here, has to do with a few small details in the history of great things; I got them from two witnesses who deserve confidence, namely, the deceased Baron

¹ "Si le rétablissement des sciences et des arts a contribué à épurer les mœurs?" This is the exact form of the Dijon Academy's prize-question.

² 1803, Volney: *Œuvres* (Paris, 1825), iv. pp. 412, 413, note.

d'Holbach and M. Naigeon, present member of the Institute. At the time when the Academy of Dijon proposed its too famous prize-question, Diderot sat imprisoned in the castle of Vincennes on account of his 'letter on the blind.' Rousseau came now and then to visit him; on one of these visits, he showed him the announcement of the prize-offer. 'This question is piquant,' said Rousseau, 'I should like to take part in the competition.' . . . 'That is excellent,' said Diderot, 'but how have you thought of treating the question?' . . . 'As it is meant,' replied Rousseau. 'Can it be understood in more than one way? Can the arts and sciences do otherwise than contribute to the well-being of the state?' . . . 'Yes,' answered Diderot, 'but this would only be to force doors already open¹ (these were his exact words). It would be much more piquant to maintain the opposite.' Rousseau goes his way, struck by this idea, writes incessantly and is crowned by the provincial academy. Some time after, when d'Holbach and Diderot are walking together in Cours-la-Reine, they meet Rousseau, compliment him on the feat he had achieved, and Rousseau jokes with them on the success his paradox has made, and on the Academy's good-nature. Criticisms and refutations come by the dozens, and Rousseau becomes exasperated by the opposition. D'Holbach and Diderot, who regularly took walks together, meet him again near the Tuileries, the question again comes up, and they are surprised to find Rousseau so embittered and transformed in his opinion, that he now in perfect seriousness and with all the violence of his character, maintains as truth what he had hitherto treated as a joke. At last d'Holbach became tired of this and said to Diderot: 'My friend, this man in his next work will have human beings walking on four legs,' and the prophecy was proven only too true. This was the starting-point for the man who took as his device: 'Vitam impendere vero'; and this man nowadays has adherents (*sectateurs*), who are so fanatic that they would like to send all who do not admire 'Confessions' to Vincennes."

¹ Vous serez un enfonceur des portes ouvertes.

This exposition, which with all its circumstantial details bears so distinctly the mark of legendary embellishment, is chiefly interesting as evidence of the light which the encyclopedists and Holbachians wished to throw on Rousseau by any means within their power. It was certainly their honest opinion too; they did not understand him, and it was impossible for them to imagine that he really meant seriously his attacks on the civilisation that they worshipped; with their psychological point of view they could not explain this absurdity in any other way than that Rousseau had found in his paradoxes a new and convenient road to fame. To them, therefore, he really appeared as a false and hypocritical, though highly-talented, charlatan.¹

However, as Ducros² has pointed out, the story is indeed edifying. If it is derogatory to Rousseau and of decisive importance in judging his personality, that he, with a clear realisation and against his better judgment, arranged his whole life and teaching in accordance with a paradox which he got from another man, on the other hand, it is anything but honourable that Diderot should have really encouraged Rousseau to make this violent attack on science. We must remember that what Diderot was doing out at Vincennes in the days when Rousseau visited him, was nothing less than the preparation of the mighty encyclopedia, that proud edifice which was to be a monument to the glory of that very science, and which was built upon the conviction that science was the road—the only road—to the salvation of mankind. If Diderot, in order to help his friend to bluff the public at the expense of his own conviction, was the real originator of the idea of the first discourse, then we have simply had two charlatans instead of one, and it would be pretty difficult to say which was the worse of the two.

¹ Indeed Volney in the work mentioned above speaks of Rousseau as a man "Qui ne traita d'abord cette question sous son point de vue paradoxal, que par jeu d'esprit et par escrime d'éloquence; et ne la soutint en thèse de vérité, que par le dépit d'une humeur contrariée et d'un amour-propre offensé."

² J. J. Rousseau, &c., pp. 180, 181.

Now what shall we believe? Shall we believe that Marmontel, Naigeon, d'Holbach, &c., all of whom adduce Diderot himself as their source, have lied, and that they simply have heard nothing from Diderot, and that the story is of their own fabrication?

This is not absolutely necessary; Diderot was a dreadful chatterer, his mouth was never shut, and such people are not always so particular as to what they may say. It is not inconceivable that at a time when he hated Rousseau, he may have trumped up the story in order to win the applause of his comrades, and that it thence went further and became preserved in memoirs and found credence among all Rousseau's enemies.

But in the only reference in which Diderot himself writes about the matter, there is nothing in the report that is contrary to Rousseau's statement. The reference occurs in the remarkable and famous digression on Jean Jacques which he inserted in his "*Essai sur les Régnes de Claude et Neron*";¹ it is very short and runs thus: "When the programme of the Academy of Dijon came out, he came to discuss with me which side he should take. 'You will take the side that no one else will take,' said I. 'You are right,' he replied."

This contains absolutely no contradiction of all that Rousseau himself relates of his crisis; it is only an evidence that Diderot at that time—1749—knew him sufficiently to be prepared for almost anything.

For us who know the history of Rousseau's development and his earlier unsuccessful literary attempts, there can hardly be any doubt that what happened to Rousseau, when he read the prize-question, was a sudden awakening of thoughts, ideas, feelings which for a long time had slumbered in him, and which had partly attained sporadic expression in his productions, but which were kept under by the pressure of the atmosphere in which he lived.

I have nevertheless dwelt so long on the discussion of

¹ Diderot: *Œuvres*, iii. 98.

this matter, which now—in spite of Maugras¹ and certain other others—must be said to have been decided in Rousseau's favour, because I need Rousseau's account, as an illustration of a number of psychological and historical considerations, which apply to our subject in an eminent degree, and it was therefore important first to make it clear that the account is genuine and that it is possible to base something upon it.

Let us try to analyse the revolution that took place in Rousseau's soul on this occasion: he wanders along the highway, he looks through a newspaper, his eye meets a question which strikes him, acts on him with explosive force, reveals to him a new world, transforms his views of society and all its surroundings,—and this new view becomes permanent, becomes the point of departure for, and in its expansion the content of, all his writings; indeed more, it becomes decisive for his life, his acts; it becomes the standard of his efforts toward perfection.

How shall we explain this break, this sudden conversion? He himself seems to have thought, though it is true in a manner somewhat coloured by the rationalism of the day, that he had an inspiration: "If anything has ever resembled an inspiration, &c." In this he is quite in agreement with most of those who have gone through a similar crisis. It is the history of religion, especially, that has such violent awakenings to relate, and here it is the regular rule that the converted have the conviction that the transformation has taken place through forces coming from without, through an act of grace, by the Spirit's having descended upon them.

But we are not content with such an explanation, if we in any way can find a means of explaining it from a purely psychological point of view without the encroachment of supernatural powers. Possibly the observation of the phenomenon which modern psychology calls subconsciousness or the subconscious life of the soul, may cast a faint light.

The discovery of subconsciousness is described by the late

¹ Gaston Maugras: *Les Querelles des philosophes*. Voltaire et J. J. Rousseau. Cf. Brunetière: *Études critiques*, iii. p. 275 f.

American psychologist, William James, as the most important discovery made in psychic research in the last decades. "I cannot but think," he says, "that the most important step forward that has occurred in psychology since I have been a student of that science, is the discovery, first made in '86, that, in certain subjects, at least, there is not only consciousness of the ordinary field, with its usual centre and margin, but an addition thereto in the shape of a set of memories, thoughts, and feelings which are extra-marginal and outside of the primary consciousness altogether, but yet must be classed as conscious facts of some sort, able to reveal their presence by unmistakable signs. I call this the most important step forward, because, unlike the other advances which psychology has made, this discovery has revealed to us an entirely unsuspected peculiarity in the constitution of human nature. No other step forward which psychology has made can proffer any such claim as this."¹

I shall attempt to give a sort of exposition of what is meant by subconsciousness; it must be very short, but nevertheless I hope that it will be sufficient to cast some light upon our subject.

The study of subconsciousness or the spiritual life beneath the threshold of consciousness, has up to this time been pursued with the best results in the study of pathological cases, by the examination of and experiments on hysterical and other mentally affected patients, often in connection with post-hypnotic suggestions, where it has been comparatively easy to isolate the phenomenon; but it is also an easily proven fact in normal life, and we have all had experiences which corroborate the existence of this subconscious activity.

Let us first take an extremely simple case that is familiar to all: In the midst of a conversation we have use for a name but cannot remember it, we strain every nerve to seize it, but the more we pursue it the more it seems to flee; at last we give it up and proceed. But then it happens an

¹ W. James : Varieties of Religious Experience.

hour or two afterwards,—suddenly and unexpectedly, at a moment when we have no use at all for it, and when our attention is turned toward something quite different,—that the name sought for rises to the surface, distinct, almost obtrusive. Here something has actually happened, a task has been performed, in which we ourselves, so to speak, have not been concerned; it has happened outside of the will-directed consciousness, in that spiritual department which one has decided to call subconsciousness or the subliminal life of personality.

Another case, in which the idea-domain is richer and the subconscious work more varied and intense; but which, as a type, is quite in harmony with the foregoing: Not long ago I was talking with a young mathematician on this subject, and he said: "Yes, I work regularly with the subconscious mind." By this he meant: when I am working on a mathematical problem and see that I am making no progress, I throw up the game, leave it to itself as it were, and wait patiently. One day it comes mounting into the consciousness, if not solved, at least in a new form, with new points of view, new-laid roads to be tried; it has lain and perfected itself in the mould of subconsciousness, has become permeated with analogies and the material of memory, has wandered on roads of association, roads of which the conscious mind has no conception."

This is certainly an experience that all who have had to do productive mental work have had in a greater or less degree; but it is—among scientific men—especially the case with mathematicians. Thus it is told of the Norwegian mathematician, Sophus Lie, that he often awoke at night with an actual visionary insight into mathematical problems with which he had been occupied, and that he would have to get out of bed and make a note of his vision in order to preserve it.

All such cases—as well as the ordinary forgetting of names and then remembering them—have one thing in common, that is, that the initiative is taken in the conscious

mind, within the threshold; consciousness has, so to speak, sent a messenger for auxiliaries who, after a longer or shorter time, have appeared with their assistance, which in the more simple cases—such as remembering names—has quite satisfied one's needs, and in other cases has at least brought new impulses and outlets.

But it is by no means always the case that the initiative comes from above—it may also come from the opposite direction.

Many of you have certainly experienced the following: You leave home in the morning, go to your office or wherever it may be, stay away the whole day; all the time there has been something seething within you, something which you seem to have forgotten, or simply something that is not as it should be. When you come home you find that some one has been to see you and has stated that he had an engagement with you at twelve o'clock. It has happened in this way: you made the engagement in an absent-minded moment, it has not reached beyond the threshold of consciousness, or it has sunk down beneath it again; but in the subconsciousness it has lain and worked though without reaching that maturity which is necessary for a fully conscious appropriation.

A lady of my acquaintance has the bad habit of leaving all her possessions behind her, and she has rather often lost objects of value in this way. Every time this has happened to her, long before she has consciously missed these lost objects, she has gone about with an unpleasant sensation, an indefinite feeling that something she does not like has happened to her,

In both these cases the subconscious mind is acting independently, without message or command from above.

And you can all certainly supply quantities of these examples from your own experiences, from stories of others, and from your reading.

However, these are sufficient to furnish us with a number of conclusions: (1) that outside of our every-day conscious-

ness, there is, in our spiritual personality, another domain which we can agree to call subconsciousness, (2) that through this subconsciousness we receive impressions and collect experiences, (3) that communication can take place between the two sides of the "threshold," (4) that this communication may appear after the initiative of the ordinary consciousness, but that (5) this subconscious activity may also take place without such an initiative, and may spontaneously work itself up toward the threshold.

Every human being receives through his senses many thousands of different impressions every day from the outer world, all of which impressions have their psycho-physical effects; but the great majority of these impressions become (fortunately) quite valueless to us, because we never get an inkling of their presence, as they do not reach as far as to our consciousness. But none of them disappears—absolutely none—at least this is the opinion of most psychologists; they all, without exception, are stored up in our subconsciousness, and even if most of them lie there of no service to our psychic personality, nevertheless they may—even the most fleeting and the dimmest of them—under especially favourable circumstances, make themselves heard from. You know the story of the peasant girl who, when in a fever, suddenly began to talk Latin. As might be expected, people were surprised over this wonder, and investigated her biography in every direction in order to find an explanation of the miracle. The only thing discovered was that the girl had once, many years before, been a servant of a clergyman who was in the habit of reading aloud from Latin books. If this story is true, it is a marvellous and rare example of the persistence with which the subconsciousness holds fast to, and never loses the effect of, an impression it has once received.

The scientific discovery of subconsciousness marks a significant addition to our knowledge of spiritual personality; we can now with certainty say at least so much, that the content of personality is by no means exhausted in the

thoughts which we ourselves direct, or imagine that we direct, in the feelings that give us a distinct sensation of desire or non-desire, the pictures that we think we possess with clearness, but that, in addition, there is in us a swarming life of ideas and associations that come into existence without any co-operation from our side, and of whose presence we only occasionally come to know.

Just as certain as it is that this duality has existed for all time, just so sure is it that people have also had experiences with it and opinions on the subject; words like intuition, inspiration, &c., contain an effort toward an explanation of the phenomenon, and there are to be found in all languages turns of expression which more or less perfectly describe the communication between the conscious and the subconscious life, as, for example: "I had a dim notion,"—or much better: "Something arose in me." But modern psychology was the first to begin a methodical study of these conditions, and it has already disclosed wonderful things.

The subconscious life, however, is not equally developed in all individuals, or more properly speaking, the emanations from the subconsciousness are very different with different people. Apart from the many definitely pathological cases, subconsciousness seems to play the greatest rôle with natures religiously inclined, and next in individuals with artistic and poetic talent.

In the autobiographies of many poets we have considerable material of interest in this connection,—in the attempts to describe to us what takes place in them during their moments of poetic inspiration. I shall mention a few examples.

Alfred de Vigny in his preface to *Chatterton* attempts to account for the actual transport that sometimes takes possession of the poet: "Within his burning brain there forms and grows something that resembles a volcano. The fire smoulders weak and unnoticed in this crater. But the moment of the eruption,—does he know when it will come?

One might almost say that he is an outsider observing what takes place within himself, it comes so unlooked-for, and as it were from heaven.”¹

This, that he feels as if it were a foreign power active in the soul, and strongly resembling as it does the automatic writing with which spiritualists and theosophists are so occupied, seems to be a feeling which in a greater or less degree is common to all artists and poets of rank.

We have a brilliant illustration in the description which Nietzsche gives of his spiritual condition during the creation of *Also sprach Zarathustra*.

“Has any one at the end of the nineteenth century a clear conception of what the poets of the great periods of history have called inspiration? If not, I will describe it. If one has the least remnant of superstition in him one can not in truth dismiss the idea that he is only an incarnation, only a mouthpiece, only a medium for mighty powers. The concept ‘revelation,’ meaning that something which stirs and revolutionises one in his innermost depths, suddenly with inexpressible certainty and in all details, becomes visible and audible, is simply a description of the condition (*beschreibt einfach den Thatbestand*). One hears—one does not seek; one takes—one does not ask who it is that gives; like a flash of lightning a thought appears, of a necessity—formed without hesitation—I was never given a choice. A transport whose enormous tension sometimes dissolves into a stream of tears, while the steps unconsciously sometimes dash forward, sometimes become slower; one is literally ‘beside oneself’ with the most distinct consciousness of a multitude of delicate shudderings and sensations of affusion all the way down to his toe-tips; a depth of joy in which the most painful and the darkest things do not give the effect of contrast but are as neces-

¹ Dans l’intérieur de sa tête brulée se forme et s’accroît quelque chose de pareil à un volcan. Le feu couve lentement et sourdement dans ce cratère. Mais le jour de l’éruption, le sait-il? On dirait qu’il assiste en étranger ce qui passe en lui-même, tant cela est céleste et imprévu.

sary, something essential, a requisite colour in such a sea of light; a sensation of rhythm which embraces an endless wealth of forms. All of this happens in the greatest degree involuntarily, but as if in a storm of feelings, feelings of liberty, of unconditionalness, of power, of divinity. The involuntariness of the picture, of the simile, is the most marvellous thing about it, one has no longer any notion of what is picture, what is simile. It all offers itself as the nearest, the most perfect, the most natural expression. It really seems, to quote a line from 'Zarathustra,' as if the things themselves came and asked to be used as similes: 'Here all things come affectionately to your speech and caress you, for they wish to ride on your back. On every simile you ride toward every truth. Here the word and the word-casket of all being rises up for you; all being will become words, all that is to be will learn to speak of you.' This is my experience of inspiration; I do not doubt that one must go many thousands of years back to find one who dares to say to me—it is also mine."¹

In this eloquent description we do not need to fix our attention on, or allow ourselves to be disturbed by, the word "inspiration," which Nietzsche himself did not believe in particularly, but which he only used as the current word to signify that which he wished to describe. We easily see that Nietzsche means much the same as Alfred de Vigny. When de Vigny writes that the poet "observes what takes place in him as if he were an outsider; it comes so unlooked-for, and as it were from heaven," it answers exactly to what Nietzsche expresses in a little more detail in the words, "all of this happens in the greatest degree involuntarily, but as if in a storm of feelings, feelings of liberty, of unconditionalness, of power, of divinity."

And if we read William James' highly interesting work 'Varieties of Religious Experience,' we find a great number of similar cases. Especially the chapter on "Conversions" contains a number of striking analogies. I mention a single

¹ Nietzsche's Werke (Taschen Ausgabe), vii. (pp. xxiv.-xxvi.)

example, David Brainerd's description of his own conversion: ". . . Having thus been endeavouring to pray—though, as I thought, very stupid and senseless—for near half an hour; then, as I was walking in a thick grove, unspeakable glory seemed to open to the apprehension of my soul. I do not mean any external brightness, nor any imagination of a body of light, but it was a new inward apprehension or view that I had of God, such as I never had before, nor anything which had the least resemblance to it. I had no particular apprehension of any one person in the Trinity, either the Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost; but it appeared to be Divine glory. My soul rejoiced with joy unspeakable to see such a God, such a glorious Divine Being; and I was inwardly pleased and satisfied that he should be God over all for ever and ever. My soul was so captivated and delighted with the excellency of God that I was even swallowed up in him; at least to that degree that I had no thought about my own salvation, and scarce reflected that there was such a creature as myself. I continued in this state of inward joy, peace, and astonishment, till near dark without any sensible abatement; and then began to think and examine what I had seen; and felt sweetly composed in my mind all the evening following. I felt myself in a new world, and everything about me appeared in a different aspect from what it was wont to do. . . ." ¹

What here happened to David Brainerd has considerable likeness to what the two poets tell, not exactly in the content of their visions, but in the spiritual conditions in which they found themselves. Brainerd, too, just as de Vigny did, felt like a stranger observing what took place in himself, and, like Nietzsche, he could also think himself—and, on account of his religious belief, with much more conviction than Nietzsche,—“only incarnation, only a mouth-piece, only a medium.”

This is the permanent and most typical characteristic in

¹ James, pp. 213, 214.

that process which takes place during poetic production, as well as under religious awakening; and if we dare explain these processes as sudden, though long-prepared emanations from the subconscious to the conscious life, nothing could be more natural. What occurs in the subliminal soul indeed takes place in another world, the impressions that are received, the idea-associations that arise—the thoughts that are born—all these things happen involuntarily, without the slightest labour, without the slightest effort of will, without the slightest spiritual participation from our side. We simply know nothing about it, and when these emanations—from some reason or other—burst forth, we feel it as though it were something coming from without; indeed, in reality, it does come from without, from a domain lying outside our consciousness, by which the only world of which we have the least knowledge is limited. Indeed, they are truly revelations, revelations from a world other than that in which we daily live, revelations which are freely given, and which thereby are so different in nature from our usual mental activity, during which we approach slowly, step by step, with purposes directed by will, an aim of which we are fully conscious. No wonder that every one who passes through such a crisis talks of inspiration and illumination, of visitations from Divinity and the Holy Spirit; if, as Nietzsche says, a man has the least spark of superstition in his soul, he simply cannot do otherwise than feel himself “as only incarnation, only a mouthpiece, only a medium.”

It appears to me that the new investigations of sub-consciousness throw a surprising light on man's spiritual life, and that they give us a new conception, especially of the so-called religious awakenings, which in the future must be looked upon seriously as psychological realities, no longer to be dismissed as nonsense, if for no other reason, because they have undoubtedly played a conspicuous *rôle* in the life and history of man. Through the scientific discovery and investigation of the subliminal mental life, we

can hope to gain a clearer insight into the religious nature of man, and into the nature of geniuses, as well as into that of ordinary human souls. On the other hand, it is certain that by this route we cannot attain any absolute estimate of the content of subconscious revelations; or, if we keep to the religious side—which is the subject closest to all our hearts—neither is there here any prospect of our obtaining any proofs of the purpose of the world or of the existence of God—but not of the opposite either. On the contrary, we have examples of men of distinguished scientific talent, like William James, whose study of the subconscious mind has resulted, not in the belief that they could offer any logical proof of it, but in a religious conviction of the existence of spiritual, supernatural guiding powers.

We have all had moments when we have felt something of that which Nietzsche describes, at least to such an extent that we understand him, when he writes: "All of it happens in the greatest degree involuntarily, but as if in a storm of feelings, feelings of liberty, of unconditionalness, of power, of divinity." We have all of us had moments when we have perceived the feeling of life itself stream through us with blessed power, moments of transport over a self-effacing sympathy with the universe, of all-permeating harmony, flashes of illumination which blaze in our consciousness, and for a second fill us with a sea of light and give us the feeling of an unfathomable depth of happiness, where all contradictions disappear and even the most painful and the darkest things seem to be necessary elements of existence; moments when we abandon ourselves to the unavoidable in holy joy at belonging to existence itself, at being no more than a part of life itself, of world-wisdom, of God. Such moments, which always come suddenly and apparently quite unexpectedly, are the streams of subconsciousness which burst without warning over the threshold of consciousness only to disappear again. They are, naturally, no proof—subconsciousness, on the whole, never undertakes to prove anything,—but it is indeed by no means inconceivable that

they may be—at any rate they have been interpreted by many as an evidence of, a messenger from a supernatural world. There is a possibility that the subconscious mind may be the organ for the perception of human connection with a divine reality, and that there may thus be more truth in the old conviction in regard to inspiration than our sober time is inclined to agree to.

This is a possibility, but, it is to be noted, a possibility that cannot be made an object of rational investigation, but only of belief or religious conviction. Personally, I cannot boast of having such a conviction; but it was necessary to try to account for its psychological existence, as, in my opinion, there is some similarity between it and the experience I have attempted to describe in the foregoing pages—that which came to Rousseau that summer day on the road to Vincennes. And so we may now proceed to apply our results in regard to subconsciousness to the special case which concerns us here.

Rousseau was at one and the same time highly talented both religiously and artistically, at once prophet, poet, and musician. Or, in other words, he possessed just those qualities that are, in a marked degree, the condition for a rich expansion of the subconsciousness, or more properly speaking, a lively communication between the psychic spheres on each side of the threshold. We may add to this a disposition to sickliness; if it is an exaggeration sans phrase to describe him as pronouncedly hysterical,¹ it cannot be denied that he had a tendency toward hysteria. His will was weak from birth, and did not become stronger through education; he was a slave to storms of passions that rent his soul. If we look back over the course of his life as far as we have followed him up to this time, we see that it was but rarely that he himself sat at the rudder and directed the course, he floated and drifted about, a victim of circumstances and whims and impulses; he wandered

¹ A. Espinas: Le "Système" de J. J. Rousseau, in *Revue Internationale de l'enseignement*, xxxi., 138-153.

about like a dreamer, half awake; he himself says expressly, that he moved about among places and people without ever seeing or hearing anything, or being conscious of anything; impressions, so to speak, floated past his retina and tympanum without for the moment reaching deeper, but they settled in his subconsciousness, where they grew and formed associations, and one day they were to disclose themselves; and long after the experience the pictures may have risen up with a distinctness and accuracy that made it possible for him to reproduce them with the greatest faithfulness and in finest detail. By the help of this belated visionary memory, such as it shows itself in 'Confessions,' we are able to follow, step by step, this storing process, to see how his subconscious soul, little by little, fed itself on impressions which took root in his soul and grew—for a long time without reaching wholly up to the threshold.

But at the same time that this luxuriant growth was going forward in the underworld, Rousseau of course, like all of us, was obliged to live in the world of reality. When conditions in Mme. de Warens' house became such that he had to leave, he stood bereft and alone, and had only himself to rely upon in order to exist. He went to Paris and was obliged to conquer a place for himself there in one way or another. He finally opened his eyes to the conditions that confronted him there and to which he was forced to subject himself, and he could hardly make a mistake as to the routes that would lead him to his goal. He tried to ally himself to the circles that could help him, paid calls on women of influence, secured admission to the salons, asserted himself in every way possible, tried to adopt the prevalent tastes, to assimilate the standards of life-values that were popular, conducted himself like a wise parvenu with ambitious aspirations.

But deep down within him there constantly muttered a still inarticulate protest; the Genevan in him revolted against the worldly splendour he saw about him, the vagabond was sometimes seized by an inexpressible longing to

get away from the golden cage of the artificial world in which he felt imprisoned, the democrat was offended in his innermost depths at the sight of the social chasms that separated human beings, the mystic shivered in the cold atmosphere of intellect in which he moved. Something of all this crept unguardedly into those miserable youthful poems in which he stumblingly tried to sing the melodies sanctioned by the taste of the day. There was a glaring opposition between the strong, though obscure, longings of his deepest instincts and his calculations of what his upstart-mind believed reality demanded of him. He had a vague idea of this opposition, but for a long time, as he says in 'Dialogues,' it was only a "sentiment sourd, une notion confuse"; the pressure of opinion was stronger than the voice of instinct, and he sought his goal for a long time on the much-travelled roads of fortune. But when he saw that they did not advance him a step, that he never had any luck, when he realised that the most worthy gentlemen of the Academy had dismissed his marvellous musical invention without investigating it, when he found no opening to the theatre, when his brilliant debut in diplomacy ended in a hopeless fiasco on account of the malice and injustice of the world,—then his instincts, in accordance with the law of opposition, swelled to a rising rebellion, the subconscious powers grew, mounting gradually but steadily, and the wall that up to this time had cut off the possibility of conscious appropriation, became thinner and thinner. At last only a gentle push was needed to burst through it.

Rousseau's soul was heaving thus in tremendous ferment on that October day when, wandering toward Vincennes with the 'Mercure de France' in his hand, his eye fell on the question of the Dijon Academy: Has the progress of the sciences and the arts contributed to corrupt or to purify morals?

Art and science, these were the gods at whose feet all his contemporaries lay prostrate and to whom public opinion had forced him to kneel—this was the gilding on the

corrupt culture he saw about him. They became the symbols of the world that he had again and again tried in vain to conquer, that hostile world to which his instincts had bowed, but always rebelliously.

It is easy to understand that this question became the gentle push that was needed.

The wall burst and in streamed a torrent of impressions and feelings that had long lain struggling in vain to become a part of the fully awakened consciousness. An unceasing succession of pictures—far-off memories from the Geneva of his youth arose in him; he saw again the serious and unselfish citizens who, without thinking of their own advantage, dedicated their lives to the welfare of the republic, brilliant heroes from Plutarch, the beloved companion of his childhood and youth, proud and courageous men, whom no suffering, no privation, no toil was able to crush or make falter; wonderful landscapes floated before his inner eye, he saw the glow of the Alps in the fading light of the setting sun, he felt the morning breeze freshen his mind, while the twittering birds greeted the dawning day, and once more he seemed to be wandering on foot in God's free nature, talking with the peasants who led their simple, innocent, peaceful lives free of intrigue and in confiding happiness; an army of thoughts which at some time or other he had industriously collected or thought himself streamed in over him and acquired new significance, forgotten moods from days long since departed revisited him, indignant hours in offence over the injustice of the world, devout moments in self-forgetful worship,—this world of ideas and feelings passed at full speed through his enraptured soul. None of them lingered, but all were there and joined together to build themselves up in a comprehensive synthesis, to a glisteningly clear view of a new world, a higher life, where human beings without harming each other and without coveting vain honour abandoned themselves in innocent simplicity to the joy for which they were created by nature. On the background of this brilliant ideal world all the worldly

splendour which had heretofore dazzled Rousseau's eyes became dimmed, the actual world in which he had moved seemed to him to lie in a sinister and sinful darkness, where the human throng overturned each other in a wild and cruel struggle for booty, where it behoved all to enter into a godless rivalry in which every man took part in order to snatch for himself a little more gold, a little more glory, a little more distinction than another; a world of falsity, hypocrisy, and dissimulation, where all went about with a smooth veneer of deceitful politeness, and smiled upon each other so as not to be duped by each other. And, as in a flash of lightning, it became clear to him what human creatures were and what they might be. By a fateful mistake in the history of humanity, the world had been set upon its head and values confused; it was necessary to turn back and find again the true values that nature had distinctly enough pointed out.

This was the content, more or less faintly intimated, of that vision which revealed itself in Rousseau's soul on the way to Vincennes; he says himself that it came over him with such power that it took his breath away and he had to lie down under one of the trees of the avenue, and during the course of the revelation he became seized with such violent mental emotion that he afterwards found the whole front of his vest wet with tears, although he had not been aware of having wept, exactly as Nietzsche, who speaks of "a transport whose enormous tension sometimes dissolved into a stream of tears," during the creation of Zarathustra.

It was no wonder that Rousseau described his experience as an inspiration,—for he also felt as Alfred de Vigny did, who observed what took place in himself as if he were a stranger; he also, just as Nietzsche did, believed himself to be "only incarnation, only a mouthpiece, only a medium." But after what we have now developed, what happened must, to sum up, be explained thus: The academic question acted as an explosion on the threshold of consciousness, it forced a breach; through this breach there suddenly streamed a

flood composed of all the memories, all the indignation, all the moods, in short all the psychic stuff that, gained through inheritance, race, and early experience, lay settled in his subconsciousness; a new road of communication was formed between the psychic spheres on the two sides of the threshold, and on this road he, so to speak, came into possession of himself, became a self-conscious possessor of his own instincts, which he felt that in the future he could follow in trustful safety. In other words, he experienced a new crisis which became decisive for his personality, for his life, for his actions, for his works.

This is not merely of psychological interest, but—through the psychological—is also of great significance in the history of the mind. For Rousseau's awakening was not without results to the world; the revelation of the subconscious power of the soul which took place in him became in many things decisive for the course of the intellectual life of his contemporaries, and still more so for those who lived in the period immediately succeeding.

If, after having become familiar with Rousseau's life, we read the biographies of the other great men of the day, Montesquieu, d'Alembert, even Diderot, we find nothing in their lives to compare with such a decisive awakening nor one possible of being so exactly located; their mental growth proceeds evenly and not by fits and starts, in the clear daylight of consciousness, without any mystical bursting over its threshold.

If, on the other hand, we examine a little later period—the next generation after Rousseau, and read biographies of Châteaubriand, Lamartine, of the German, Northern, and French romanticists, we see that it has almost become the rule; almost all of them have had in their lives such visionary moments, in which the scales fell from their eyes, in which they suddenly became aware of the entire coherence of life or whatever they may call it.

It is so usual that one is almost tempted to believe that Rousseau founded a school, that it had become cant and

affectation, a misplaced fashion, and that every man who wished to amount to anything considered himself obliged to live through such a crisis as the criterion of his genius. And of course there may be something in this, the power of suggestion is great; for example, when we read the numerous collections of letters which date from about the beginning of the last century and see the overwhelming flood of tears that flows from all these pens, we do not feel sure that all this is genuine, we cannot quite believe that there is any sort of reasonable relation between the soul's real emotion and all this exaggerated humidity.

But we must not on this account exaggerate the significance of fashion's power, for if we take into consideration all the really important men who have gone through conversions similar to Rousseau's and the serious effects these experiences have had on their lives and works, the explanation is too facile and quite unsatisfactory.

We must certainly look deeper for it. If we widen the field of our observation to include larger domains of the intellectual history of mankind, I think we shall see that in intellectual or strongly critical periods, there will appear few or no crises, but that they will be frequent and regular at times when the emotional life is strong, and the inhibiting powers less predominant.

In other words: criticism and logic cut off the communication between the conscious and the subconscious life, while on the other hand a strong life of the feelings, dreaming, contemplation, and such, favour intercourse between them.

Rousseau's historical importance was just this, that he opened up channels which had long been choked, that he broke through the rind of intellectual routine which was about to kill the emotional life in the depths of the soul, that he cleared a way for the passage of passion, of dreams, of longing for eternity, of mysticism.

Or in other words: he was the first great romanticist. Lasserre is certainly right when he says: "Rousseau is not

the forerunner of romanticism, he is romanticism itself purely and simply. There is not a theory, not a system, not a form of emotion, which later had the right to be called romantic, that is not recommended and authorised by his works. Nor do I find, in all the ideas, passions and fancies which constitute the content of his eloquence, anything that may not be described as romantic. There is nothing in romanticism that is not Rousseau, nothing in Rousseau that is not romantic."¹

Nor is Lasserre wholly wrong when he—like Seillère²—treats Rousseau and romanticism as a disease. For while it is certainly true that the romantic renaissance had already become an historic necessity, neither is it to be denied that the new ideals which Rousseau brought into the light of day were encumbered with many weaknesses; and Rousseau's life and works, as well as romanticism's later course, bear sufficient evidence, not only of precious and indispensable riches, but also of many of the phenomena of disease—fever, fantasies and hallucinations.

It is important here not to look too long at either extreme; but so much I think one may say with certainty, that those who, like Lasserre and Seillère, see in romanticism only a regrettable and fatal sickness, are considerably farther from the truth than those who are guilty of the opposite partiality. However, we shall have many occasions to return to this when we estimate Rousseau's separate works and thoughts.

What concerns us is the awakening that we are treating for the moment. But even here we can certainly find both strength and weakness in Rousseau's contribution. For indeed the revelation did not come from above but from within, and it bore signs both of his genius and of his weaknesses. The vision in which he saw the future world that

¹ Pierre Lasserre : *Le romantisme français* (Paris, 1908), i. ed. *Mercure de France*, pp. 14-15.

² Seillère calls the 3rd volume of his *Philosophie de l'impérialisme—Le mal romantique*.

so overpowered him with its tremendous beauty could not, by its very nature, be complete, for it was composed of elements of Rousseau's own soul, and on that account suffered under the failings of his character, his intelligence, his education. That this was actually the case we shall see when we now, leaving the awakening and its psychic course, go over to study the outburst, the first outburst, the first 'Discours.'

XIX.

THE OUTBURST.

IN two of the three references in which Rousseau mentions his experience on the road to Vincennes, he reports that the vision, as a coherent whole, disappeared, he retained an indelible impression of its wealth and clearness, but he was never again able to call forth all the details that had revealed themselves to him at the decisive moment with sparkling clearness. "Oh, if I could have written down only a fourth part of what I saw and felt under that tree. . . . All that I could retain of the many truths that illuminated me during the course of a quarter of an hour were later scattered about, though in feeble form, in the three most important of my writings, namely the treatises on the Sciences, on Inequality and on Education" (second letter to Malesherbes). "From the living flame which then blazed up in his soul there came sparks which have been seen to glisten in his writings in the course of ten years of delirium and fever . . . " (second Dialogue).

Only feeble and scattered glimpses of his vision, only sparks of the flame that burned in his soul, this is what we can see in Rousseau's writings; the rest continued to be no more than an experience of his own, one which he was never able to communicate fully to any one.

This too bears the stamp of the same truthfulness and psychologic probability that marks Rousseau's entire report of his crisis; it is quite in harmony with what others, who have had similar experiences, have had to relate, and we

ordinary creatures have certainly all of us, in all modesty, lived through something similar; moments when we have felt something rush through our souls with overwhelming power and wealth, but which has become so miserably meagre and poor when we have tried to seize it and put it into words.

Well—the feeble sparks which Rousseau modestly thinks are scattered about in his works, were at least brilliant enough to awaken the attention of the whole world, and burning enough to kindle the most violent passions into full flame to this very day.

This was true even of his first writing, his real debut, the immediate fruit of the academic question which for the sake of shortness one generally is in the habit of calling ‘*Le Premier Discours*’—the treatise on science.

This was, first and foremost, a violent protest, an outburst of that hatred which in the course of time had accumulated in Rousseau’s soul—a vehement attack on the times and its idols. It is indeed always thus, the new grows on the ruins of the old, the sons consume the fathers, says Heine, and the symbol of the sons with their fists clenched against their fathers augurs the appearance of a new generation. Even such a positive spirit as Bjornson’s made its first appearance with its weapons turned against Welhaven and the prevalent moonshine-poetry, and we who belong to an older generation have already lived through three violent changes of front.

A man of original spirit is by his very nature always isolated and lives in opposition to the powerful, and before he begins to build his own work, he must clear the ground, remove everything that stands in the way of it. Émile Zola significantly called his first book ‘*Mes haines*’—my hatreds. “Hatred is holy,” he says, “it is the indignation of strong and mighty hearts, it is the belligerent contempt that those whom mediocrity and stupidity offend, feel for them. To hate is to love, it is to feel one’s soul warm and noble, it is to live abundantly in contempt of all ignominy and stupidity.

"Hatred consoles, hatred exercises justice, hatred broadens.

"After every rebellion against the fatuity of the times, I felt myself younger and more courageous. I made hatred and pride the two regular guests of my soul. I found pleasure in isolating myself and in hating, in my isolation, everything that offended justice and truth.

"If I am worth anything at all, it is because I am alone and because I hate."

And after having summed up all those phenomena of the day that were the object of his contempt and hatred, Zola closes his introduction with these words:

"And now you know what I love, now you know the beautiful passions of my youth."

Rousseau too might have called his first book '*Mes haines*,' and, like Zola, after having poured forth his hatred, he might have addressed himself to his readers in the same words, "And now you know what I love, now you know the passions of my youth."

Rousseau's first '*Discours*' falls into two divisions, which, it is true, sometimes encroach upon each other; but, on the whole, the arrangement is observed so that the first part is essentially descriptive, the second essentially argumentative; the first part attempts to prove the statement that the progress of sciences always goes hand in hand with a debasement of morals, while the other part tries to show that this contemporaneity is, at the same time, a condition of cause and effect, that the progress of science is the cause, or one of the causes, of the destruction of morality.¹

Even in the introductory words we see a self-confidence that Rousseau shows here for the first time; while a few years before, in '*l'Allée de Sylvie*' (1746), he was seen still to be vacillating between his instincts and his reason, finally to acknowledge the latter to be right, now there is no doubt in

¹ In his reply to Gautier, Rousseau himself sums up the contents of his treatise with these words:—"Après avoir employé la première partie de mon discours à prouver que ces choses avaient toujours marché ensemble, j'ai destiné la seconde à montrer qu'en effet l'une tenait à l'autre."

his heart. He understands well enough, he says, that the honourable academy will find it difficult to reward a man who dares to attack science in an address to one of the world's most learned societies. But when all is said, the point for him is indeed not to mistreat science, but to defend virtue, and he relies on the justice of the noble gentlemen. But even if this hope should not be fulfilled, he is nevertheless conscious of having expressed his own conviction, "and there is one prize at any rate that I cannot fail to win; that I will find at the bottom of my heart."

First Part.—Almost from the very beginning Rousseau expands the academic question considerably, he does no more than hint in the first lines at the limitation which lies in the words *rétablissement*; throughout the whole of the rest of the treatise he eliminates it absolutely, and treats the problem from a quite general point of view: the relation of science and art to morality.

He leaves us no longer in doubt as to where to place him; after a short and eloquent description of the blessings of culture, in which he especially praises French elegance, which, in its unpedantic confidence distinguishes itself so advantageously from the peasant-like clumsiness of the Germans and the contortions of the Italians, he goes immediately over into vehement, aggressive criticism. "How sweet it would be to live among us if this outer manner answered to the inclinations of the heart, if decorum were virtue, if our maxims really were our principles of life! . . . But so many good qualities are rarely to be found united, and virtue is not accompanied by so much pomp. A rich man is known by his finery, an elegant man by his taste; but a powerful and healthy man has other characteristics; we find the powerful and healthy body beneath the peasant garb of the worker of the field, not beneath the gold lace of the courtier. And splendour and finery are no less foreign to virtue, which is the power and health of the soul. A good man is an athlete who likes to fight naked; he despises all these wretched decorations which hinder him in the use of his powers,

and which, for the most part, were invented to hide some deformity."

Before culture found admittance and taught us to put our words on stilts, we were, to be sure, inelegant in our manners, but we were natural creatures, and each of us knew with whom he had to do and could act accordingly. But now that the art of pleasing has become something that all learn and must be capable of, our whole life is stamped by a wretched and disappointing uniformity; all souls seem to have gone through the same mill. Politeness comes constantly forward with its demands, good-breeding with its injunctions; we always follow custom, never our own personalities. No one dares to be himself; in that human flock which is called society all men under the same circumstances always do the same thing unless more weighty motives arise. We never know, therefore, with what sort of a man we are dealing: if we wish to know our friends we must wait for the great moments, or, in other words, wait until it is too late, for it is at just these moments that we need to know them.

An army of vices originates in this uncertainty. Sincere friendship, real respect, unshakable confidence have disappeared; suspicion, calumnation, fear, coldness, hatred, treachery—this is what is hidden under this faithless and uniform veil, under this urbanity of which we are so proud, and which we owe to the enlightenment of our century. We no longer profane the Lord of the Universe with coarse oaths, but poisonous blasphemy does not wound our sensitive ears. Perhaps we no longer praise our own deeds to the skies, but we joyfully deprecate those of others. We no longer bluntly insult our enemy, but we slander him adroitly behind his back; national hatred is perhaps extinguished, but at the same time patriotism has entirely disappeared. There are indeed dissipations that are forbidden, vices that are stamped as infamous; but there are also others that are honoured in the name of virtue, and that one is obliged to have or act as though one had.

Appearances are observed everywhere—but that which

lies underneath looks quite different. If a stranger were to come to Europe and attempt to judge us from what he saw about him, from our science and art, the politeness of our manners, the pleasantness of our words, the good-will which we go about with from morning till night and pretend to show each other—the impression he would get of our morals would be exactly the opposite of what it should be.

Where shall we seek the reason for this depravity to which no one can be blind? Yes, our souls have become corrupt in the same proportion as that in which our art and science have neared perfection. Nor is this misfortune anything peculiar to our day; it is as old as the world. The daily ebb-and-flow of the tide is not more regular in its dependence on the star which shines for us at night than the fate of morality and honour on the progress of the sciences and the arts. We have seen how virtue fled as enlightenment rose above the horizon, and the same phenomenon has been observed at all times and in all places.

Look at Egypt; she was once the mistress of the world, but when she became the mother of philosophy she soon became a prey—to Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Turks.

Look at Greece, which was once peopled by heroes who time and again triumphed over powerful Asia; but when it became the home of science it was soon the booty of Macedonia. All the eloquence of Demosthenes was not able to revivify a body which luxury and art had enervated.

Rome, which was built by a shepherd and whose greatness was supported by peasants, began to degenerate with Ennius and Terence, and after Ovid, Catullus, and Martial, the world-capital, which had once been the temple of virtue, became the scene of crimes, the ignominy of nations, and the plaything of barbarians.

And what shall we say of the old Byzantium or of the China of to-day?

Everywhere, without exception, the same thing repeats itself. On the other hand, when we look at the few nations that have kept themselves free from the contagion of en-

lightenment, we see quite different pictures spread before us. The old Persians, Scythians, Teutons—no one could withstand them, because they were virtuous, uncontaminated by art and science. The same is true of Rome as long as it was poor and ignorant; even in our own days there lives a people who have preserved their peasant-like simplicity and who are therefore a model of courage and faithfulness—the Genevans.

Nothing proves more clearly the truth of this observation than a comparison between Athens and Sparta. Athens became the land of breeding and good taste, of orators and philosophers; the elegance of buildings answered to that of the language: one saw marble and canvas everywhere made living by the hands of masters; all those masterpieces that were to become models for all depraved periods came from Athens. The picture of Sparta was less brilliant. "There," said the other nations, "men are born virtuous, and even the air seems to inspire virtue." Nothing has come down to us from the Spartans except the memory of their heroic deeds. But do you think such monuments should be of less value to us than the wonderful marble statues which Athens has left us? Sparta continued to live with her republican virtues in her happy ignorance long after Athens had gone to the bottom with all her brilliant art and science.

Certain wise men, however, stood against the general stream and cultivated virtue even in the home of the Muses. Thus, above all, did the greatest of philosophers, Socrates, pass the sternest judgment on the artists and learned men of his day and eulogise ignorance. Do you think perhaps that if he should rise from the dead, he would have a different opinion of our learned men and artists? Oh no, my friends; he would certainly continue to despise our poor science, he would certainly not help to increase that flood of books which pours in upon us from all quarters; now, as then, he would not have given us any other precepts than the example of his own life. For that is the only noble way in which to teach mankind.

As Socrates struggled in Athens, so did Cato in Rome against the artificial and subtle Greeks who falsified virtue and effeminised the courage of his fellow-citizens. But science, art, dialectics triumphed and, one by one, all honourable men disappeared; the Romans had once been satisfied to practice virtue, but everything went to ruin when they began to study it.

O, Fabricius! what would you with your great soul have thought if, to your misery, you had been awakened from the dead and had stood face to face with this splendid Rome which you once saved by your bravery, and which, because of your name, has been honoured more than on account of all its victories? "O ye Gods," you would have said, "what has become of your thatched roofs and rural hearths, where moderation and virtue formerly had their abode? What fateful splendour is this that has taken the place of Roman simplicity? What foreign language is this I hear? What effeminate customs? What mean all these paintings, all these statues, all these buildings? Deluded creatures! what have ye done? Ye, the masters of the nations, have made yourselves the slaves of the frivolous creatures ye have conquered! is it rhetoricians who rule over you! was it in order to enrich architects, painters, sculptors, and jugglers that ye suffused Greece and Asia with your blood? The ruins of Carthage the booty of a flute player! O Romans, hasten to tear away these amphitheatres, to pull down these marble pillars, to burn these paintings! drive out of the town these slaves who subjugate you, and whose fateful arts demoralise you. Let others seek glory in vain talents; the only talent that is worthy of Rome is to conquer the world and to spread the kingdom of virtue. When Cineas mistook our senate for an assembly of kings, it was not because he was dazzled by vain splendour or artificial elegance; he heard nothing of all this frivolous eloquence, the study and transport of small-minded men. But what sort of majesty was it that Cineas saw before his eyes? O, my citizens, he saw a sight which neither your wealth nor all your arts will

ever be able to produce, he saw the most beautiful sight that has ever been seen under the sun—a collection of two hundred virtuous men, worthy to direct Rome, to rule over the earth.”

Thus would Fabricius have spoken to the depraved Rome of later times, and if Louis XII. or Henry IV. could see Paris of our days, the words that would fall from their mouths would not be very different.

Certainly nowadays Socrates would not have emptied the tankard of poison, but he would have drunk of a still more bitter cup, he would have had to endure scornful derision and contempt, which is a hundred times worse than death.

Thus it is seen that luxury, licentiousness, and slavery have, during all time, been the punishment for the arrogant attempts we have made to escape from that happy ignorance in which eternal wisdom had found a place for us. Divinity has enveloped its operations in a thick veil in order to warn us, nature has wished to protect us against science as a mother wrests a dangerous weapon from her child. Mankind would indeed be depraved if it had the misfortune to be born learned.

After Rousseau had thus, in the first part of his treatise, pointed out that there is a firm connection between science and the arts on the one side and a corruption of morals on the other, he proceeds, in the second part, to prove that it could not be otherwise.

Art and science are unclean in their sources, the questions that they propound are presumptuous, the roads that they take in seeking their goal are dangerous, the effects they produce demoralising.

According to an Egyptian tradition, which was also extant in Greece, the inventor of science was a god hostile to men; and if we investigate the question philosophically we will find that the origin of men's knowledge is consistent with this myth. Astronomy is born of superstition; eloquence, of ambition, hatred, flattery, lies; geometry, of covetousness; physics, of vain curiosity, and even ethics has its sources in

human arrogance ; in other words, the sciences are born of our vices.

And just as impure as their sources is that which is the object of their curiosity. Of what use would the science of law be if it were not for the injustice of mankind ? what would become of history if it were not for tyrants and wars and conspiracies ? in short, who would pass his life in barren reflection if each one of us thought only of his own duty and the demands of nature, and dedicated his time to his country, to the unhappy, and to his friends ? Are we indeed created to pass our lives on the brink of a well, where truth has hidden itself for always ?

Dangerous are the roads on which scientific investigation wanders, sown with mistakes which more than outbalance the advantages that one may gain from truth ; and the chances of finding it are small ; for lies are multitudinous, but there is only one truth. And where do we find those who seek it sincerely ? and even if we were so fortunate as to find it who of us would know how to use it in the right way ?

However, the greatest objection to science appears in its effects. Born in laziness it encourages idleness, and every useless citizen is a noxious animal. Tell me, O ye famous philosophers,—what good have all your speculations done ? Suppose that we had never heard a word of all your discoveries in regard to the movements of the stars, in regard to the relation between the soul and the body, in regard to the manner of living and formation of insects, &c.—would we have been less well governed on that account, less numerous, less flourishing, less feared, more demoralised ? Just reflect on the significance of all your productions. And if there is so little use in the work of you who are the best—tell me what shall we think of that class of obscure writers and idle scribblers who consume the property of the state without giving anything in return.

If they were only satisfied with doing nothing, but these empty phrase-makers go about with their paradoxes and

undermine the foundation of faith and destroy virtue. They smile contemptuously at such old-fashioned words as religion and fatherland, and use their philosophy to destroy and debase everything that is holy to men.

And other misfortunes follow in the footsteps of art and science. Luxury, which is also born of idleness, seldom comes without them, and at any rate they never come without it. I know well enough that the philosophers of our day, among all their other absurdities, have discovered that luxury brings honour and well-being to the state, but even if they will deny the necessity of making laws against luxury, they certainly do not dare to deny that morality and morals are of essential significance for the continuance of the state, and that luxury is the bitterest enemy of all morality. Admit that luxury serves to increase wealth, but what would become of virtue if we lived only to enrich ourselves at any price. Our philosophers value a man according to the amount of money he can spend; if they were right, a Sybarite would be worth thirty times more than a Lacedemonian. The mania for splendour is seldom to be found united with honourableness; people who are degraded at the thought of all our little daily needs cannot rise to anything great, and even if they should have the power, their courage would fail them.

And thus also taste becomes depraved; every artist wishes for applause, and if he lives in a community where frivolous and luxury-loving youth and small-minded women are permitted to dictate the tone, he is forced to sink his genius to the level of the times and submit to creating productions that are admired in his own day rather than masterpieces that will not make him famous until after his death. Tell me, O famous Arouet, how often have you sacrificed to the gods of the times, how many times have you kept back some great and manly beauty out of consideration for our wretched gallantry which is so fruitful of small things. If there is a single soul among us strong enough to withstand the spirit of the times and not degrade himself to a purveyor of

wretched products of fashion, misery will be his lot and he will die in poverty and neglect. The greatest painters and sculptors are forced to serve the depraved taste and spend their lives on tasks that lie far, far beneath the dignity of their genius.

At the thought of all this depravity, the simple naturalness of the primitive times comes involuntarily to mind, it seems like a beautiful strand decorated by nature's hand alone; our eyes cannot relinquish it, while, to our sorrow, it becomes more and more distant. As long as men, in their innocence, loved to have the gods witness their deeds, they lived with them in the same huts; but as soon as they became evil, they could no longer endure these inconvenient spectators, and they exiled them to splendid temples; and soon they began to rival them in splendour, their own dwellings became as splendid as the temples and, at the same time, depravity grew and vices were fairly elevated on marble columns or engraved on the Corinthian capitals at the entrance of the rich man's palace.

In proportion as the demands for life's pleasures increase, the arts advance in perfection and luxury spreads, real courage becomes weakened and war-like virtues disappear. It is a result of scientific investigation and all those arts that are practised in the darkness of the cabinet. In the ancient Greek republics the citizens were wisely forbidden to abandon themselves to all sorts of sedentary work that weaken the body and enervate the soul. How could an effeminate creature of luxury endure the hardships of war and defend his fatherland?

But still worse are the effects of science's encroachment—on morals. We see it most clearly in education,—the insane education of our day, which thinks only of equipping the intellect with graces at the expense of the judgment-power. Everywhere I see enormous institutions where the young are taught, at exorbitant prices, everything in the world—except their duty. They are ignorant of their own language, but are taught to speak others which are no longer in use any—

where in the world ; they can say by heart long verses which they hardly understand themselves ; they do not learn to separate truth from delusion, but they learn to dissemble in order to deceive their fellow-creatures ; words like “ high-mindedness, justice, humanity, courage ”—they do not know their meaning, the name of fatherland has no fond ring for their ears, and they hear the name of God, not in awe, but in slavish fear. They learn numerous things only to forget them later, but nothing of which they may have use as grown men.

The cause of all this wretchedness lies in the inequality which has gained an admittance among men, because in every way talents are distinguished, while virtues meet contempt everywhere. Yes, this is the most striking fruit of our studies and the most dangerous of all their consequences. One no longer asks if a man is honourable, but if he is talented, not if a book is useful, but if it is well-written. Wit is richly rewarded, but virtue is and will continue to be unhonoured. There are a thousand rewards for beautiful speeches, not one for beautiful deeds.

The philosopher does not run after property or gold, but he is not indifferent to glory ; and when he sees it so shamefully awarded, virtue faints and finally dies in poverty and neglect. It is an unavoidable result of the preference that is given the agreeable talents over the useful ones ; we have enough professional men and experts—physicists, mathematicians, chemists, astronomers, poets, musicians, painters ; but we have no longer any citizens, or if there are any, they are to be found scattered about in the country where they go to the bottom poor and despised.

Rousseau makes a slight exception in favour of academies, which do limit the evil to a certain extent. The academies that the great Louis established not only as the seat of science, but also as the strongholds of virtue, can, in their beneficial activity, help to lessen the devastations of philosophy, they understand that virtue also needs protection and honour, they fight not only to increase our wisdom but

also to spread sound knowledge. But that such institutions exist is indeed a new proof of the existence of the evil which they are meant to remedy, for one does not invent medicine for a sickness that does not exist, and besides, this medicine is not any more effective than medicines are in the habit of being. On the other hand it helps only to increase the number of scientific men notwithstanding. One might think we had too many peasants and a paucity of philosophers. I shall not attempt to draw a comparison between philosophy and cultivation of the fields, no one would listen to it nowadays. I only ask what is philosophy? what is it they teach us, these friends of wisdom? When one hears them one is tempted to take them for a crowd of jugglers, who stand and scream from different corners of the market-place, "come to me—I am the only one that is not deceiving you!" One insists that matter does not exist—it is all imagination; another that there is no other substance to be found than matter, no other God than the world. One insists that there is no such thing as virtues or vices, that good and evil are only chimeras; another that human beings are wolves, and can consume each other safely without any qualms of conscience.

Such are they, those prodigies, whom their contemporaries cover with glory and posterity rewards with immortality. And their precious wisdom is handed down from generation to generation. But it is much worse to-day than in ancient times; then they did not yet know the art of book-printing, they did not understand how to perpetuate the extravagances of the human mind; but thanks to typography and the use we make of it, the dangerous dreams of Hobbes and Spinoza will remain for all time. And all the writings which appear every day, and which stink of the corruption of our times, will also be inherited by our posterity, beautiful evidences of the happy progress of our arts and sciences. But if our descendants are not as maniacal as we are, they will lift their hands to the heavens and exclaim in the bitterness of their hearts, "Almighty God, Thou who doth

hold us all in Thy hands, save us from the enlightenment and wretched arts of our fathers; give us once more ignorance, poverty, innocence, the only gifts that bring us happiness and that are precious to Thee."

One disastrous result of the easy access one has to art and science is that so many of the uninspired force themselves into the Holy of Holies, a swarm of dilettants and plagiarists, a burden to the community. Many a one who passes his life as a wretched verse-maker or inferior mathematician might perhaps become a capable factory-hand. Those whom nature meant to be the great men of science need, in truth, no encouragement. Bacon, Descartes, Newton, mankind's greatest teachers, got along without any instructors. And if it is permitted to anybody to dedicate himself to science and art, it must be to him who feels within him the ability to go his own way. And they should be put where they can do the greatest good; let them be given positions where they can expand their genius, for the soul grows under the accomplishment of duty. The prince of eloquence was consul in Rome and the greatest philosopher was chancellor of England. Had they been tied to a teacher's desk, their works would have smacked of their *métier*. Princes should admit to their councils those who are most capable of advising them, should give the most learned men asylums at their courts, let them receive the only reward that is worthy of them —the opportunity to contribute to the happiness of the people; then we shall see, for the first time, to what heights virtue, science, and authority, in noble rivalry and co-operation for the good of mankind, are capable of reaching.

"As to what concerns us ordinary people," thus closes Rousseau, "to whom heaven has denied great talents and not meant for glory, let us remain in obscurity. Let us not run after fame which is going to escape us anyhow. . . . Of what use is it to seek happiness in the opinions that others have of us, if we are able to find it in ourselves? Let us

leave it to others to teach people their duty, and let us be contented to fulfil our own, according to our ability. No more is necessary.

“O virtue, thou, the uplifted science of innocent souls, are so many institutions and so much pains necessary for us to learn to know thee? Are not thy principles graven on all hearts? In order to learn thy laws, is it not sufficient for us to retire into ourselves and, undisturbed by passions, to listen to the voice of conscience? Behold, this is the true philosophy; let us be satisfied with it; and let us, without envy of the famous men who make themselves immortal in literature, try to emphasise the same difference that was once seen to exist between two great nations: that the one understood how to talk excellently, the other how to act excellently.”

XX.

THE RECEPTION.

IN 'Confessions' (viii.), after telling how his first 'Discours' came into existence, Rousseau says: "After the essay was finished I showed it to Diderot, who was satisfied with it and pointed out one or two corrections. However, this work, although full of warmth and power, absolutely lacks order and logic; of all the writings of my pen it is the weakest in reasoning and the poorest in melody and harmony; but no matter how talented one may be, one does not learn the art of writing ('l'art d'écrire') in a day."

Notwithstanding this sharp self-criticism, he yet counts the treatise on science as one of his chief works, which, together with 'Inequality' and 'Émile,' forms an inseparable whole (second letter to Malesherbes).

Rousseau was perfectly right in both opinions.

Notwithstanding the author's thirty-eight years, 'Le Premier Discours' is a beginner's work—poorly conceived, poorly composed, poorly written. As an answer to the academic question, as a solution of the problem, the treatise is in an eminent degree unsatisfactory, feeble, one-sided, often quite childish in its paradoxes; his conclusions are, on the average, weakly founded, his statements sometimes contradictory; he does not keep to the order of presentation that he himself undertook to follow, proofs which should properly appear in the first part come in the second, and *vice versa*, the argumentation is full of loops and holes, the articulations incomplete through and through; the style is

loaded with many false decorations, it is bombastic, declamatory, over-full of rhetorical questions and exclamations; it is as if one were looking at a man who incessantly strikes himself on the breast and flashes his eyes in order to impress his audience—the diction is as far removed as possible from the tone of reflectiveness and deliberation demanded by the subject.

And yet Rousseau is right, it is “*plein de chaleur et de force.*”

We read the little treatise to this very day, 160 years after its birth, we often become impatient over its lack of coherence and its miserable logic, we are sometimes irritated by the author's superfluous gestures and mock attitudes; but nevertheless we are carried with it, we cannot get away from that stream which, notwithstanding all that floats with it, runs with dashing speed through the whole production, from the very first touch to the last antithesis. And when we close the book we feel as if we had heard a cry—a cry of release from a man escaped from prison, and now hurling his anathemas against that hell where he has been imprisoned for so many years. Even in this, his first outbreak, Rousseau is seen to be in possession of himself, of his feelings, his instincts; but he is not yet full master of his talent, for, as he says, no one learns to write in a day.

The most important point is that he has found his own voice, that he is immediately seen to be a man who sees with his own eyes and goes his own ways, that he is an original intelligence.

“There are in history,” writes Hermann Hettner, “certain important men whom one may correctly describe as new, unbiassed, primal natures. We are not always conscious of the fact that the advantages which we owe to a regular schooling are rather dearly bought. We obtain general conceptions long before we have had the sensuous views from which these conceptions are drawn. We are taught not to see things with our own eyes; from the very beginning we see them through the spectacles which the prevalent manner of

thought forces us to wear, and only a few reach a point where they are able to lay aside these spectacles. The same cause that lies behind the fact that children of cultured parents are sure to be cultured themselves, but, as a rule, without any deep peculiarity or originality,—the same cause is the reason that all really creative and new-forming spirits almost always spring from those circles of society and those classes that lie far below the furrowed tracks of the common highway. Such a child does not receive his mint finished and stamped in his hand; he must shape it and stamp it himself. He develops more slowly but more independently; he accepts nothing as certain and conceded; he looks on everything as a subject for question and doubt. With unheard-of courage such natures place their simple ego in opposition to the whole of humanity, and they consider of importance nothing whose existence this ego does not acknowledge as justifiable.

Rousseau was such a new, deep, original nature."

So says Hettner, and I do not doubt but that he is right; but, on the other side, there are a number of authors who have a very low opinion of Rousseau's primeval simplicity or originality; nor is it to be denied that he, in the light way in which he treats literary property-rights, has given considerable material for doubt in this respect.

As early as 1764 a learned monk published a thick book of about 400 pages, which he called 'Les Plagiats de M. J. J. Rousseau de Genève.' The author, who was anonymous, but whose name was Cajot, deals chiefly with 'Émile,' but in a supplement treats also of the treatise on sciences; he presents Rousseau as a man "who does not own an opinion, although he strains himself to make us believe so, a man who goes clad in rags from other authors' writings; a regular ragman in the republic of letters ('un homme enguenillé des écrits d'autrui; un vrai fripier dans la République des Lettres'). For a long time he has had this little occupation to thank for the slight reputation he has got; every one has his own talent and mission."

Père Cajot, who is a marvellously well-read and sometimes even a witty man, pokes about in the entire world's literature to find those books whence Rousseau has taken the rags for his dress, and he finds many, some of them in the most unexpected places—from Carlstadt, Cornelius Agrippa, and Lilio Gregorio Giraldi, all of whom wrote *de vanitate scientiarum*—from Hobbes, from La Bruyère, but above all from Montaigne, with whom Rousseau seems to have been most familiar, and whom he therefore plundered most thoroughly.

One hundred and twenty-nine years after the French monk (1893), a German M.A., Gustav Krueger, secured a cheap doctor's degree in Halle for treating the same subject. He calls the treatise 'Fremde Gedanken in J. J. Rousseau's erstem Discours.' He turns to the same authors as Cajot and refers to the same places, adds a single (very doubtful) point,—arranges the whole thing in a little better chronological order, and the treatise is finished.

When one reads Cajot, or, a little more conveniently, Krueger's edition of Cajot, one becomes convinced that thoughts allied to those of Rousseau are to be found in a number of the older works, that he has taken several of his historical examples second-hand from what he has read, and that, here and there, he has used a turn of expression, sometimes almost word for word, from other authors, especially from Montaigne.

And nothing is more natural; for not only the question, but also the standpoint Rousseau chose for his reply, are, indeed, as old as time. We find it as early as in the first Book of Moses, in the myth of the Fall of Man, brought about by partaking of the forbidden fruit, which was really the fruit of the tree of knowledge. And throughout all time the Greeks, the Romans, and the Christian thinkers have time and again used hard words in speaking of the pride and pedantry of the learned men and the wise, and of the causality existing between the progress of culture and the undoing of morals.

Insomuch Rousseau's treatise contained nothing new or hitherto unsaid, otherwise than by carrying old modes of thought to extremes, by pursuing paradoxes to their limits, by not hesitating to attack the art of printing or by praising ignorance without reservation. In the usual or philosophic, or, if you will, the scientific treatment of the problem, Rousseau was neither new nor original, either in the way in which he propounded the question or in the way in which he replied to it. If this were the only point, then Hettner's judgment of Rousseau as "*eine neue, tiefe und ursprüngliche Natur*" would have been entirely false, while Cajot would have been quite right in describing him as "*un homme enguenillé des écrits d'autrui*."

But Rousseau's originality lies in quite another direction; it lies in the pertinence of its outburst, it lies in his having chosen the moment he did to deliver his anathema, it lies in the fact that he, in the year of Our Lord 1750, in that Babylon called Paris, cried out so that he was heard, against all the want, the injustice, all the infamy, caused by the spirit of the times, by its false gods, its false prophets, its preposterous ideas. Rousseau's work was not a philosophic investigation; it was lyricism, the lyricism of indignation, a burning heart's protest against all the ruling powers. It was an ego, a mighty ego that rebelled against a society, against opinions which it cast aside with passionate hatred. He set up his own individuality against the whole world. He would not allow himself to be thrown into the common mill only to come out exactly like the others; he would not obey the demands of politeness or listen to the commands of good breeding. He did not let himself be overpowered either by the luxury and splendour after which all others strove, or by the cleverness by which all others sought to gain distinction. Life offers bigger values than wealth and honour; cleverness is not wisdom, distinction is not happiness. There are things more important than writing books, human life is a holy thing that is disgraced by the disease of pleasure-seeking, a serious thing that is vitiated by

sophistries. Wretched is the spirit that bows down to a fashion set by useless cavaliers and small-minded women. It is the skin-deep that rules, the exterior that controls; it is a matter of indifference that a book is useful, if it is only well-written, that a man is honourable, if he only has some talent or other. How Rousseau felt crushed among all the littlenesses of culture, how he despised the conventionalities that he could never learn to acquire, how he hated all these scribblers who wrote and wrote only for the sake of writing, all these women who expected a bon-mot from him, all these philosophers who went about, each with his maxim in his pocket, the last word, the latest novelty!

But far away he caught sight of a strand adorned by nature's hand alone, a blessed strand, but one that receded farther and farther at the noise of city-life and mean passionate desires and sinful lust, under the craze for competition and the loud-voiced demands of the mania for glory.

The longing for his strand, the hatred of everything that blocked his way to it, this is really the content of Rousseau's first 'Discours'; in many places, it has found a weak and confused expression, it often sinks under a false pathos and mock rhetoric; but it lies at the bottom nevertheless, and as it was not only Rousseau's longing, but the crying need of the times, his sighs reached the hearts and melted the feelings of multitudes of men and even greater multitudes of women.

Jules Lemaître quotes a reference from Garat (in his 'Mémoire sur M. Suard') which depicts, in a striking manner, the effect of Jean Jacques' first works: "At this moment there arose a voice which was not young, but yet quite unknown, it came not from a desert nor from the woods, but from that very society, those academies and that philosophy where so many a light had glistened, so many a hope had been born. . . . And what the voice said—it was an accusation against the whole of humanity—an

accusation against literature, against science, against society itself. . . . And it did not arouse a general scandal as is said; no, it aroused admiration and a sort of terror almost universal."

Garat's evidence is, however, of a considerably later date; he had indeed just been born when Rousseau's treatise first came out, so that he had no personal impression, could only report what he had heard from others. But there are plenty of contemporaneous evidences. When the treatise was printed Rousseau was sick, and it was Diderot who attended to the publication; a short time afterwards he sent Rousseau a note in regard to its first reception: "It carries everybody away, it is a success of which one has never seen the equal."¹ And that Diderot was not exaggerating particularly at this time may be seen from the way in which Rousseau's antagonists, one after another, referred to his writing. Gautier considers it so very important to prove the falseness of Rousseau's statements "because his writing, according to the opinion of learned journalists, seems about to cause a revolution in the ideas of our century."² *Le Cat* speaks of it as one of the wonders of literature. "Literature, like the heavens, has its comets. The Genevan citizen's treatise must be ranked with these strange, and to credulous people even sinister, phenomena. Like all the world I have read this famous work."³ The reply of King Stanislaus of Poland also is prefaced by words that express surprise over this sensational work.⁴

A French author, in order to describe the effect of Rousseau's first discourse, compared it to a pistol shot in an

¹ "Il prend tout par-dessus les nues; il n'y a nul exemple d'un tel succès." —Confessions, viii.

² Rousseau: *Œuvres* (Paris 1793), xxii. 70. ". . . puisque selon de savants journalistes, il paraît capable de faire une révolution dans le sidées de notre siècle."

³ *Ibid.*, p. 104: La littérature a ses comètes comme le ciel. Le Discours du citoyen de Genève doit être mis au rang de ces phénomènes singuliers, et même sinistres pour les observateurs crédules. J'ai lu, comme tout le monde ce célèbre ouvrage.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

open street, which causes people to huddle together.¹ The comparison is excellent, it gives a striking impression of the instantaneous effect that Rousseau's words produced; but it gives only the outer side. The effect was infinitely deeper than can be exhausted in words or pictures which express only the sensational. And it certainly is extremely unjust toward Rousseau for Bersot (and many others besides) to lay such strong, almost preclusive, stress on the fact that Jean Jacques was a master on the art of drawing attention to himself. I do not doubt that this element was present in the mood-complex under which he worked when he wrote his prize treatise; he was too great an artist and poet not to be burningly ambitious, he had lived too long in obscurity, without fame, not to hunger after recognition, and even if the treatise may be looked upon as the literary expression of the moral reform he talks about so much, the fruit of his vision on the road to Vincennes, at the same time it was only the first step in his self-education, which, however, in this respect, it is true, never reached its goal; the chief thought in his works, which should later find so much richer and mightier expression, was certainly this, that what was necessary for human beings was to retire into themselves and build up their happiness there instead of seeking it in other people's opinion of them. But Rousseau never attained this superiority, least of all at that moment when with trembling expectation he was embarking on his first conquest of the world; he thought not only of the truth he had to tell, but he dreamed also of the halo that was to radiate over the truth-teller's head. There are many places in the 'Discours' which give evidence of the fact that Rousseau himself was not unaffected by the prejudice which lays chief stress on the necessity of works being well written, many sentences composed with the thought of what effect they would have, how they would astonish, what a sensation they would create. No matter how contemptuously he spoke

¹ Bersot in the preface to Saint-Marc-Girardin: J. J. Rousseau, i. v. Cf. Chuquet also (Rousseau, p. 72), who uses exactly the same comparison.

of public opinion, he could nevertheless not do without it, and he was by no means insensible to it; this showed itself distinctly enough in the passionate violence with which he replied to and defended himself against all his assailers. Of course, there is a decided inconsistency in this; but it is an inconsistency that seems to be a characteristic common to the psychology of all artists and perhaps of all human beings. "All artists wish for applause" says Rousseau in his treatise, bluntly and without circumlocution, and he himself was no exception. And has there ever really existed an exception? How furious Henrik Ibsen was when the Norwegians whom he so deeply despised did not immediately show themselves ready to praise the dramas in which he so joyfully heaped abuse upon them! The longing for an echo is indissolubly connected with the artistic talent itself. But for the really great it is not the chief point, and it was not so with Rousseau either.

The chief point was something quite different, it was the truth that he had to proclaim, it was his violent longing for that blessed strand which was always receding, and his passionate hatred of that world which caused it to recede; the chief point was the vision he had had on the road to Vincennes, that world of the future (and of the past) which had revealed itself to him so brilliantly, and which he, with burning conviction, pointed out as the goal toward which he and the rest of mankind should wander.

And just as the inspiration of Rousseau's writing was something infinitely deeper than the hope of a conquest of the public, its effect, too, was something quite different and more than a sensational event, a pistol shot on the street, which caused people to huddle together a moment only to proceed immediately on their ways.

In the reference from Garat which I recently quoted, there is an expression which is well worth noticing. The essay, he says, aroused general admiration and a sort of terror almost universal.

This latter expression is too peculiar and too decided to

have been composed by Garat; he must have heard it from his older contemporaries who had lived through that terror.

"Une sorte de terreur presque universelle." Yes: this was the effect of Rousseau's voice the first time it was heard—like the fateful writing on the wall during Belshazzar's orgy—like a "mene tekel" over the empty, commonplace, self-sufficient worldliness of the period. Beneath all his false verbiage there was nevertheless a prophet to be found; under all the unreasoning paradoxes, many deep truths. The multitude was not satisfied simply to huddle together at the sound of this new voice which so boldly slung its accusations against their false gods; they stood and listened to the strong words, they felt the earth tremble under them, their consciences became restless. Something of the tremendous passion which had forced the pen into Rousseau's hand streamed forth into the souls of his readers; he forced them to stand still in their wild pursuit of prey and glory, to look into themselves and weigh themselves, once more to estimate the values that up to this time they had considered the highest; and many of them became seized with the same melancholy longing for that blessed strand which had always floated before Rousseau's eyes while he was pronouncing judgment.

XXI.

WAR.

IN all the writings called forth by Rousseau's philippics, we find something of the same restlessness; men were never tired of pointing out the absurdity of his statements; newspaper articles, treatises, whole books on the subject of his 'Discours' appear again and again; while the treatise itself is hardly more than fifty octavo pages the refutations cover many hundreds; all antagonists agree that there is not to be found a grain of truth or correctness in Rousseau's attack on culture; they bow to his talent, and almost all of them have fine things to report of his eloquence, but they say his reasoning is full of contradictions and really not worth refuting; nevertheless they cannot leave it alone, they analyse his little treatise sentence by sentence; they interpret it and tear it to pieces, and edify their readers with fresh songs in praise of culture. So that, after all, we get a strong impression that there is danger afoot, that defensive measures must be taken, that the walls must be fortified, if the enemy is not to go off with the victory in this struggle, which they represent as so absurd, so purposeless, and so superfluous.

One attack follows another in rapid succession during the year 1751. First comes Gautier (anonymously in 'Mercure de France') with his short "Observations sur le Discours qui a remporté le prix de l'académie de Dijon en l'année 1750, sur cette question proposée par la même académie: si le rétablissement des sciences et des arts a contribué à épurer les mœurs"; and after a reply from Rousseau, a

longer article from the same author: "Réfutation du Discours qui a remporté le prix de l'académie de Dijon en l'année 1750, lue dans une séance de la société royale de Nanci, par M. Gautier, chanoine régulier, et professeur de mathématique et d'histoire."

The same year, somewhat later, appeared "Réfutation du Discours qui a remporté le prix à l'académie de Dijon en l'année 1750, par un académicien qui lui a refusé son suffrage." This, however, was later proven to be a hoax; the anonymous author was not a member of the academy of Dijon at all; he was, however, a member and secretary for life of the academy at Lyons, and his name was Le Cat.

After Le Cat came King Stanislaus of Poland (who lived in Paris at that time in exile, and was highly interested in intellectual things) with "Réponse au discours qui a remporté le prix de l'académie de Dijon." And finally the most important contribution, written by Rousseau's old friend from Lyons, Bordes, to whom Rousseau had written his two rhymed letters in 1742, which I have already discussed: "Discours sur les avantages des sciences et des arts, prononcé dans l'assemblée publique de l'académie de sciences et belles-lettres de Lyons, le 22 juin 1751."

These are the most important of the refutations and the ones to which Rousseau replied. But there were numerous others of which it is not worth while to give an account. Nevertheless I will mention that 'Discours,' outside of the domain of the French language, also found an opponent, and that no other than the twenty-two year old Lessing, who in 'Neuestes aus dem Reiche des Witzes' wrote a review of the book, in which he, with a deeper understanding of Rousseau's significance than any of his French assailants, tried to point out the exaggerations and the untenable assertions in the treatise.

The only thing to be said about all the French refutations is that they no longer interest us; not that it is to be understood that they are all empty or valueless in themselves, for many of the authors were intelligent and highly-culti-

vated men, some of the contributions, notably that of Bordes, very weighty additions to the discussion of the question itself; and, further, it must be acknowledged that they may be right in what they say, indeed, perhaps in most of it; but this is of no consequence here, the chief point is that none of them was an original intellect, none of them said anything new of significance for mental development, or anything that became a fruitful ferment in the history of thought or of literature. It is quite right, therefore, that while the great Genevan and Parisian editions of Rousseau's works from the end of the eighteenth century included all these contributions, they are quite omitted from the later editions. They were nothing to preserve—except by specialists they have quite rightly been forgotten.

On the other hand, Rousseau's replies to his assailants are of quite another stamp. In many respects they are of great interest. In the first place, it is here that Rousseau's literary talent fully blossoms for the first time. He proves himself a brilliant controversialist, and his qualities of style develop quite remarkably during the struggle; but still more important is the process of growth which his thoughts undergo during this controversy. The objections of his enemies force him again and again to go back to the problem under discussion, necessitate new considerations and new reflections; he often modifies what he first said, eliminates paradoxes and exaggerations, but sometimes he is driven to still more far-reaching radicalism. He develops new sides to the question,—new thoughts and new proofs announce themselves, the treatment is enriched, broadened, given more depth, he becomes more and more strengthened in his chief question becomes armed for new tasks during the struggle. Already in the first 'Discours' Rousseau adopts the point of view which he, in all the chief points, kept throughout his entire life in regard to the different intellectual phenomena of his time; but it is only in a quite general way that he turns upon popular tendencies, without nuances; it is only as a cry of protest—a "no." He does not agree; but during the

discussion his opposition gains a more decided content, and his positive programme begins, more or less decisively, to take a detailed form; we discover, in words dropped, in slight hints, the outlines or germs of several of the works that were to come. Rousseau's replies therefore to the assailants of 'Discours' are of considerable interest in tracing the origin of his chief works.

We must therefore examine them a little more closely.

Rousseau appears here for the first time as a controversialist, and proves himself to be a brilliant and well-equipped warrior. He has evident joy of the struggle. He proceeds with fearless courage, sometimes also with a gaiety that otherwise very seldom appears in his writings; he grows under the strife, is constantly expanding the field of his operations, begins with small skirmishes against Raynal and Gautier, and ends with a regular campaign against his most dangerous enemies, the King of Poland and Bordes. An excellent fencing-master in both the good and also sometimes in the less good meaning of the term, he sees instantly and clearly his opponents' weak points, takes the offensive, wrests the weapon from his enemy, and uses it in the service of his own cause; sometimes he lifts the subject of contention high over his antagonist's head, so that he cannot reach it, crushes him under his eloquence, lashes him with his scorn; his fighting methods are clean and unspotted in that he always keeps to his question, never, like Voltaire or Heine, undertaking to direct his attack against his opponent's private personality; but he does not hesitate to use tricks when it is necessary. Especially in the retreat; he is a caviller never willing to give up his position, even when he acknowledges to himself that it cannot be maintained. If he takes a step backward he does so in such a way that it is not noticed; he repeats his old assertions, but in a slightly modified form, omitting the greatest absurdities, and continuing his defence from this new standpoint as if nothing had happened; or he acts as though his opponents had misunderstood him, and had only attacked a man of straw whose

battles it was no concern of his to fight. In this way he diverts the struggle from the points on which he is, and is aware that he is, open to attack; or else he himself purposely misunderstands his opponent, and massacres him mightily for assertions that he himself has subtly put into his mouth; or he gets out of it by means of a comparison or simile that has very little to do with the subject, but which in itself is so dazzling that, for the moment, one forgets what it is all about.

During the struggle Rousseau became more and more master over his talent, he secured a better hold over his pen, and did not so easily fall into superfluously embroidered rhetoric; his style became more powerful, more concentrated, more pointed, antithetical. His argumentation was much more solid than in the treatise itself, more fortified with facts.

Rousseau's reply to his assailants may be read as a commentary on 'Discours'; it gives us a clearer idea both of what he meant and of what he did not mean, and also gives us a glimpse of the consequences of his opinions. Let us follow him in the discussion and try to find out all we can in regard to his thoughts, fastening our attention on these three chief points: (1) What was his real object in attacking science? (2) In how far would he abide by the paradoxes which he threw out in his 'Discours'? (3) How and at what points in the discussion did he refer to the application of his own principles?

(1) What Rousseau meant in his 'Discours' was nothing less than an "overturning of all values." While all his contemporaries had a superstitious confidence in the blessed effects of enlightenment, Rousseau laid chief weight on a quite different point; to him the chief thing is not to know but to be able, not to talk but to act, not to be clever but to be good. Vain occupation with arts and sciences leads men astray from that which is the most important. "In proportion as a taste for these childish things increases in a nation, it loses the sense for more solid virtues; for when one has

exempted himself from the obligation of being a good man, it is easier to distinguish oneself by talk than by good actions, provided one is only agreeable."¹

The requisite for human happiness is not the exterior culture which takes delight in pretence, but inner moral strength. The object of Rousseau's sermon is not so much to demolish science as to give virtue its proper plane again. "It is not science I wish to crush, it is virtue I defend," he says in the treatise, and he repeats it again and again during the discussion in the strongest possible terms. "I know in advance," he says in his first contribution,² "with what big words they will assault me: enlightenment, knowledge, laws, morality, reason, propriety, consideration, amiability, politeness, breeding, &c. To all this I will only reply with two other words, which ring still more loudly in my ears: Virtue! Truth! I will cry out incessantly: Truth! Virtue! If one discovers here no more than mere words, then I have nothing more to say." And he closes his long reply to Bordes with these words: "Finally, let me be allowed once more to emphasise that it is only love of mankind and of virtue that has caused me to break my silence; the bitterness that may be felt in my attacks on the vices I see about me is born of the pain they cause me, and of a burning wish to see men happier or rather more worthy of being so."³

Culture makes men uniform, it demands of those who live in society that they shall all be alike, and thus a system of lies is instituted; they are not asked to be virtuous but to be decorous, forms replace realities, prudence takes the place of straightforwardness. Yes, but is this so dangerous, ask his opponents; would not life be insupportable if people went about and expressed their opinions without the least self-control? And they cite against him La Rochefoucauld's famous dictum: "hypocrisy is the homage that vice pays to virtue." "Yes," replies Rousseau excitedly, "in the

¹ Réponse à M. Bordes, i. 119.

² Lettre à M. l'abbé Raynal, i. 53.

³ Réponse à M. Bordes, I. 161; cf. *ibid.*, 81.

same way that Cæsar's murderers paid homage to him, when they threw themselves at his feet in order to kill him more safely. Be this epigram ever so brilliant and stamped with its author's ever so famous name, it is no more correct for all that. Would any one say of a scoundrel who adopts a family's livery in order to steal from them more conveniently, that he is paying homage to the master of the house whom he robs? No: to cover malice with the dangerous cloak of hypocrisy is not to honour virtue, it is to scorn it at the same time that one profanes its insignia; it is to add craft and meanness to all the other vices; it is to cut off for ever the way back to honourableness."

As for hypocrisy, it is exactly this that is the idol of the times; the less virtue there is in men's hearts the more it appears in their manners; one can measure demoralisation by prudishness. "I never go to the theatre and see a comedy of Molière without admiring the delicacy of the audience. A rather broad word, an expression more coarse than obscene,—everything offends their modest ears, and I have no doubt but that the most demoralised are always the most scandalised. But if we compare the morals of Molière's day with those of ours, is there any one that believes that we would be favoured by the comparison? When a man's fancy is once defiled he becomes scandalised over everything. When one has no other good than the exterior, one must make a special effort to retain that."¹

No, men were much better in the days of the barbarians, when they were certainly coarse but sincere, and did not pretend to be other than they were. Yes, even for criminals Rousseau shows a certain degree of sympathy if they are only not liars and hypocrites. "There are to be found elevated characters," he says to the King of Poland,² "who take even into crime something proud and noble, who betray within them a spark of the heavenly fire which glows in beautiful souls. But the mean, hypocritical, cringing souls

¹ Rép. à M. Bordes, i. 119.

² I. 105.

resemble a corpse, where one finds neither fire nor warmth nor life-sources."

It is not so much the vice of his day as its littleness that he despises, not so much malice as meanness; his contemporaries are not capable of certain vices because they demand strength and boldness. "I do not accuse the people of this period of having all vices; they have only those that are contemptible, they are only rascals and deceivers; I do not believe they are capable of the vices that demand courage and firmness."¹

These remarks, which cast such an interesting light over the "psyche" of the nineteenth century even down to Ibsen and Nietzsche, sprang from the same strong individualism that is the foundation-motive of the whole of Rousseau's authorship, his violent longing to be permitted to be himself without bending to fashion or opinion. But according to Rousseau, the smallness of the period, which could not even produce a proper criminal, is due to art and science, that is to say to the superficial and one-sided culture of the day, the empty intellectual values of salon life, pedantry's placid conviction of having found the truth and solved all problems, the overdone society life which blunted all edges, all independence, all distinction, all originality. For him life is a holy thing, not a game of rivalry as to who can make the cleverest remarks or produce the most striking books. The important thing for him is not "l'esprit," or the intellect and its tricks, but the soul, that is to say the entire human creature with all his powers, his feelings, his passions, his spontaneous conviction of his own divinity and oneness with the Highest Being. . . . "I look through all the brilliant investigations of our academies, and find nothing more than clever sophistry, which is very little in keeping with the dignity of our natures. They exercise their wits, but the slavish soul cringes and languishes."²

We are drowned in books; his opponents say that good

¹ Rép. à M. Bordes, i. 120.

² Ibid., i. 135.

books are the only preventive against the contagion of example. But "in the first place the good books of our learned men are never so numerous as their bad examples. In the second there are always more bad books than good ones. And in the third place, the safest guiding-star for honourable men will always be their reason and their consciences. For those that have debased souls or hardened consciences, reading is of no use."¹

Thus Rousseau confirms in his polemical writings, in expressions that become more and more definite, what he had cried out in 'Discours'; he maintains, ever with increasing power, the claims of virtue over culture, the individual over opinion, the soul over the reason, instinct over logic, conscience and inborn feelings over book-learning and literary sophistry. But at the same time that he thus strongly maintains his standpoint in the chief question at issue, he nevertheless, in the course of the discussion, makes many concessions—though without conceding it.

(2) It was natural that his opponents should attack, first and foremost, his most obvious absurdities and paradoxical exaggerations; he replies that they were not meant as they were interpreted, and uses the opportunity to modify his thought. To King Stanislaus he 'maintains that his short and ironical eulogy of science in the introduction to 'Discours,' is seriously and sincerely meant. Why should one not believe him? "Could it be because I have been too concise? It appears to me that I might have said considerably less on several pages. . . . Science is very good in itself; this is self-evident, and to maintain the opposite is to be lacking in common sense. The Creator of all things is the source of truth; to know everything is one of his divine attributes, to acquire knowledge and increase one's wisdom is to participate in the highest intelligence in a way, and it was in this meaning that I eulogised knowledge."²

He spoke not of science itself, he spoke but of scientists

¹ Ibid., 155.

² I. 76.

and the use they made of it, and the position in society which they have created for it; it is not science with which we are concerned, "it is our science," he says in one place quite plainly,¹ "and the science of other days that has resembled ours,—the subtleties of the sophists, the pharisees, the hair-splitters, the formalists; in one word, pedantry."

Neither did he say nor mean that the sciences are the root of all evil, or the only root; "they have only a good share of the blame, notably that which especially belongs to them—of having given vice a certain pleasant colouring, a certain honourableness which prevents our feeling terror at it."² He by no means maintains that the sciences are good for nothing, nor was it with this point that the academic question was concerned. "What it was concerned with was to know whether or not the re-establishment of the sciences has contributed to the purifying of morals.

And by showing, as I have done, that our morals have not become purified at all, the question is almost answered."³

The most striking exaggerations in 'Discours' were his representation of the art of book-printing as a thoroughly injurious and demoralising invention, and his tolerably clear statement in regard to the desirability of burning and razing to the earth all libraries, museums, &c. Of course his assailants do not let this pass unchallenged; but Rousseau replies to them by denying that he ever said or meant any such thing.

Of course one should do away with things that could be misused if the misuse causes more injury than the use does good. "But let us stop a moment at this last inference, and let us beware of drawing the conclusion that we of to-day should burn all libraries and destroy universities and academies. By doing this we should simply plunge Europe into barbarism and morals would not gain anything by it. It

¹ I. 157.

² In the preface to 'Narcisse,' which is his last contribution to the discussion, see xi. 43 note.

³ Ibid., the text.

is with pain that I am bound to express this great and sorrowful truth—it is only a step from enlightenment to ignorance, and the transition from the one to the other is frequent among nations; but it has never been seen that a people once demoralised have ever returned to the ways of virtue. To try to destroy the sources of this evil would be vain. To remove the causes of vanity, laziness, luxury, would be vain; yes, it would be vain to lead men back to that primal equality which is the supporter of innocence and the source of all virtue; when their hearts have once become demoralised they will always continue to be so; there is no longer any remedy to be found except that of a great revolution which is almost as much to be feared as the evil itself, and which it would be shameful to desire and impossible to prophesy.

So, since the sciences and arts have already succeeded in demoralising men, let them be allowed to lessen in some degree men's barbarity."¹

He repeats this several times in his polemics, and, as we shall soon see, it is not without significance in view of the standpoint he takes in his later writings; here he establishes a distinction which he constantly maintains later, namely, that it would certainly have been better if libraries and universities had never come into existence; but as men have already become demoralised from many causes, among which the sciences are very important ones, then we must keep them, because to a certain extent, they can help to modify the evil; in a modern society where luxury and the greed for money are the ruling powers, art and science furnish an outlet for many desires which without these diversions might take a more dangerous course.

Therefore libraries, universities, and printing-houses may be allowed to remain standing.

Nor does he now take the same unconditionally prejudiced attitude towards luxury that he did in 'Discours.' It might in itself be innocent enough if it were not for the rôle it

¹ Rép. au Roi de Pologne, i. 112, 113; cf. Rép. à M. Bordes, i. 159.

plays in man's estimation of the values of life. "Luxury demoralises everybody, both the rich who enjoy the possession of it and the poor who go about wishing for it. It can certainly not be said that to wear lace cuffs and embroidered clothes, or to own an enamelled snuff-box, is an evil in itself; but it is a very great evil to attach any importance to such foolishnesses, to count those that have them among the happy, or to use time and industry, which every man owes to more noble aims, to secure them."¹

In the course of his polemics, Rousseau modifies the statements that he made in 'Discours' on several other points also, but in everything essential he confirms what he first said. However, the third point to which we will direct our attention—the expansions that develop during the debate, the new sides to the question that he discovers—are still more interesting and important than these adroit little concessions.

(3) One of the chief points in his attack on science was its lack of religiousness, the manner in which it undermines people's respect for that which has been holy,—in one word, its exaggerated rationalism. In the 'Discours' he aims his attack only in one direction,—against the philosophers. In his reply to the King of Poland, on the other hand, he attacks the other side with equal strength; rationalism is the diseased spot not only of the philosophers, but also of orthodoxy, also of the theologians. "It is quite true," he says, "I should have expressly attacked those childish sophistries of scholasticism by means of which, under the pretence of illuminating the principles of religion, one destroys its spirit and substitutes scientific haughtiness for Christian humility. I should have turned with greater force upon those arrogant priests who dare to lay their hands upon the ark, to stay with their feeble wisdom a building supported by God's own hand. I should have expressed my indignation against these superficial creatures who, with their miserable trifling, have debased the divine simplicity of

¹ Rép. au Roi de Pologne, i. 103.

the gospel and have transposed the teachings of Jesus Christ into syllogisms."

Here, in truth, no learning nor science is needed. "When the new covenant was entered into, it was not to the learned that Christ confided His teachings and His priestship. In His choice He was led by the partiality He had always shown for the poor and the simple; and in the instructions which He gave His disciples there is not a word to be found about study or science, unless it was to express the contempt He felt for all such." . . . But later it became different; when learning conquered religion, religion suffered. And now? "Our libraries are flooded with theological books, and there are swarms of casuists among us; formerly we had saints but no casuists. Science blooms and faith withers away; the whole world wishes to teach others to do good and nobody wishes to learn it; we have all become *doctores* and ceased to be Christians.

No, it was not with so much art and paraphernalia that the gospel spread itself over the whole world, and its dazzling beauty permeated the hearts of man. This Divine Book, the only one necessary for Christians, and the most useful one for those who are not Christians, does not need to be deeply studied in order to inspire us with love for the author and with a desire to follow His teachings. Never has virtue spoken a language so full of sweetness; never has the deepest wisdom been expressed with such power and simplicity. One never reads it without feeling oneself a better creature. O, ye stewards of the teaching that this Book proclaims, do not take so much trouble to teach me so many useless things! Lay aside all these learned books that are not able to convince me or to move me anyhow. Throw yourself at the feet of that God of Charity Whom you have undertaken to teach me to know and to love; pray that you yourselves may have that humility which you ought to preach to me. Do not display before my eyes this arrogant science, neither that unseemly splendour which dishonours you and makes me rebellious; be yourselves moved if

you wish to move me; and, above all, show me in your own life those principles which you claim the right to teach me. You would then not need to know or to teach me more of it, and your priestship would be perfect. In all this there is no question of belles-lettres or philosophy. Thus should the Gospel be preached, and thus did its first apostle spread it triumphant over all nations, not 'aristotelico more,' as the fathers of the Church are in the habit of saying, but 'piscatorio.'"

In such expressions as these, which are repeated many times during the discussion, Rousseau states with clear distinctness the religious standpoint that he never abandoned later, an isolated stand facing in two directions, just as strongly against the dogmatic theologians as against the disbelieving philosophers. He found that both tendencies expressed equally objectionable phases of the spirit of the times, of "*notre siècle raisonneur*," as he calls it in one place.¹ If he considered the learning of the atheists and the materialists a shameful debasement of the divinity of life and of the human soul, the presumptuous investigations that the casuistic theologians made in regard to the nature and the aims of God were no less an abomination to him. The philosophers and the theologians supported each other in a wretched co-operation to destroy religion, which to Rousseau consisted in nothing else than an inner unshakable conviction of life's divinity and oneness with the Deity, as well as in obedience to the voice of conscience (or God), which always speaks clearly and distinctly enough in regard to what is demanded of us. It was quite natural, therefore, that he was scorned by the philosophers, who explained the whole of existence as a chain of physical and chemical processes, and that his writings were burned by the theologians, who thought that salvation depended on belief in a complicated system of dogma. Rousseau's religious thoughts later came to a richer expansion and to more complete confirmation, but the point of view he adopts takes clear form

¹ Preface to '*Narcisse*,' xi. 46.

for the first time in the polemics roused by the first 'Discours.'

Something similar may be said of his political opinions as they appear in the discussions; it is true that here the standpoint is not so clearly formed as it was in the case of the religious point of view; but the feeling on which they are based is present more certainly and in a stronger degree than in 'Discours,' and, above all, is much more richly differentiated and applied than these. This foundation-feeling is that of the democrat, the proud Genevan republican's self-assertiveness in a despotic monarchy, the hatred that the working man's son feels for wealth and privileges.

We see it already in the manner he assumes towards the King of Poland in his controversy. Ducros and other authors very unjustly ridicule the changed tone which Rousseau uses towards this opponent, in comparison with the tone that he uses towards others. Naturally there is a difference. I do not doubt but that Rousseau's vanity was considerably tickled at finding the Duke of Lothringen, the King of Poland, Louis XV.'s father-in-law, among his antagonists, and in one place in his reply he uses words which indicate that he could be gallant too when he so desired, and was perhaps not so lacking in the qualities of a courtier as he wished people to believe. I quote the reference because such sentiments are so unusual, not to say unique, in all Rousseau's writings. In his attack King Stanislaus had been guilty of a rather ignorant mistake, in that he had spoken of Socrates as an assailant of the Epicureans and Stoics, who, of course, were not exactly his contemporaries. To this Rousseau replies with a gallant bow: "when Socrates mistreated the sciences, it appears to me he could not have been aiming at the arrogance of the Stoics nor at the effeminacy of the Epicureans, nor at the absurd jargon of the Pyrrhonists, for none of these people existed in Socrates' time. But this little anachronism does not sit so ill upon my opponent: he has spent his life more usefully than in verifying data; and he is under no more

obligation to know his Diogenes Laërtius by heart than I to have seen what takes place on a battlefield at close view.”¹

Undoubtedly one can detect a courtier's smile under this reply, but nevertheless there is not to be found a single trace of toadyism or servility in it; and besides, Rousseau's attitude throughout the whole of the “reply” is dignified and blameless. These are the words with which he opens it: “Perhaps I owe an expression of thanks rather than a reply to the anonymous author who has honoured my ‘Discours’ with an answer; but that which I owe to gratitude will never cause me to forget that which I owe to truth; nor shall I forget that when people speak of reason they place themselves under the natural law and reassume their original equality.”²

I believe that, in the year 1751, there did not live in the whole of Europe a single writer who would have found these proud and matter-of-course words to use to a princely opponent.

However, it is of more interest to consider the many violent expressions of Rousseau's democratic point of view which were every moment slipping from his pen. Sometimes, especially in the notes under the text, it almost takes the form of a revolutionary appeal, which presages the passionate words he was to use in his next ‘Discours’ (on Inequality).

His opponents had pointed out the great significance that luxury has for national economy. Admit, he replies, that luxury may sometimes give bread to the poor; “but if there were no luxury there would be no poor,” and he adds the following violent commentary which in 1751 had a very real and burning interest, and in it he gives a picture of the times, the truth of which was later corroborated tenfold by historic investigation: “Luxury supports hundreds of poor in our towns, and it lets hundreds of thousands die in the country. The money which circulates in the hands of the rich and the artists to satisfy their superfluities, is lost to

¹ I. iii.

² I. 74.

the existence of the peasant; he must go without clothes, because others must have gold lace. The waste of the materials which serve as food for human creatures is enough of itself to make luxury hated of mankind. My opponents may consider themselves lucky that the deplorable refinement of our language makes it impossible for me to go into details in this respect, for it would cause them to blush for the cause they defend. We must have meat-juice for use in our kitchens, therefore many sick people must go without bouillon. We must have liqueurs on our tables, and therefore the peasant drinks nothing but water. We must have powder for our wigs, and therefore there are many poor who have no bread.”¹

From this observation of the conditions that he sees about him, he begins to develop partially a philosophical view of social questions, and finds, or thinks he finds, the causes of the social misery—inequality in conditions. Wealth lies at the bottom of the whole thing. “The masses crawl about in misery. . . . A strange and fateful social order where accumulated wealth is constantly finding means of still greater accumulation, and where it is impossible for him who owns nothing to acquire anything, where the greatest scoundrels are the most respected citizens, and where one must renounce virtue if one wishes to become ‘un honnête homme.’”² As early as in the preface to ‘Narcisse,’ he points to property as the chief source of all unhappiness,³ and in his reply to Bordes, he exclaims: “Before these wretched words ‘mine’ and ‘thine’ were discovered, before there existed those cruel and brutal creatures called masters and the other kind of deceivers and liars called slaves, before there were men despicable enough to dare to live in superfluity while others die of hunger—what was it that crime consisted in?”⁴

Rousseau does not shrink from praising a community where all rich, privileged, and useless members disappear.

¹ Rép. à M. Bordes, i. 129. Compare the description of peasant life in the eighteenth century in Taine's ‘L'ancien régime.’

² Preface to ‘Narcisse,’ xi. 51.

³ Ibid., 52 note.

⁴ I. 131, 132.

His opponents ask: "What sort of a sight would mankind offer if it consisted only of peasants, soldiers, hunters and shepherds?" and he replies without hesitation: "An infinitely more beautiful one than that of a mankind that consisted of cooks, poets, goldsmiths, painters and musicians."¹ It is characteristic of Rousseau's manner of thinking that he wished to omit soldiers from the first list. "War is often a duty but it is not meant to be a *métier*. Every man should be a soldier in order to defend his liberty; but not in order to interfere with that of others; to die for one's fatherland is too noble a calling to be entrusted to mercenaries." This is probably the first time that any one distinctly advocated general military service and spoke of its democratic significance.

In other ways also Rousseau reveals his political thoughts sporadically during the discussion, everywhere stamped with the same democratic feeling and connected with his view of the evils of over-culture. His hatred of town life, which is favourable to social distinctions, finds a stronger and more decided expression than in 'Discours'; his opponents maintain that scientific men are no less occupied than the peasant who ploughs his field; certainly, replies Rousseau,² a child who builds a house of cards is also occupied; but the point is whether that with which one is occupied is of any service to mankind. Yes, but does he mean that just because bread is a necessity all men should engage in cultivating the earth? "Yes, why not? let them even live on grass if it is necessary. I should rather see people grazing about the fields than consuming each other in towns."³

At the same time he also launches the question in regard to the advantages gained by the might and power of the great and populous countries; his opponents have referred him to the grand expansion of the great world-powers as a result of the advance of culture. In his reply to Bordes Rousseau had already put a question mark at this state-

¹ I. 134.

² I. 152.

³ Ibid. Compare Voltaire.

ment. "It is difficult to imagine," he says, "that morals can be measured by a surveyor's instrument. But one cannot say that a country's extent is a matter of indifference when it is a question of the morality of the citizens. There is certainly a connection between these things; and I do not know but that the connection is perhaps inversely proportional. It is an important question to consider; and I think that one should look upon it as still undecided, in spite of the tone more scornful than philosophic in which my opponent thinks he can cut the knot."¹ And to this he adds in a note: "My opponents think that they can impress me by their contempt for the small states. They must not be too sure that I shall not one day come and ask them if, on the whole, it is a good thing that the great states exist at all."

As is known Rousseau did take up this question later for more serious discussion, and, in 'Contrat Social,' which was written twelve years after 'Discours,' he decided it unconditionally in favour of the small states; the community-ideal which he here defends is modelled after the little city-republic, while he simply considers the great state as a temporarily necessary evil which makes the execution of the democratic principle difficult in a high degree, for this can only come to pure and unalloyed expression in an assembly of the people, which is impossible in a great state where one must resort to representation and other makeshifts. In this, as in so many other things, Rousseau shows himself influenced by his childhood memories of the republic of Geneva.

Rousseau accentuates his pedagogical point of view, just as he did the religious and political, in more detail here than in 'Discours' also; he comes back to it several times during the discussion, and very strongly maintains the necessity of reconstructing education, so that the chief stress shall be laid, not on equipping the intellect with embellishments, but first and foremost on developing the power of judgment

¹ I. 143, 144.

and the ability to act—in other words, the foundation-principle on which 'Émile' was built ten years later.

While 'Discours,' in its contents, is essentially aggressive and critical, on the other hand, in Rousseau's answers to his assailants, the positive thoughts which lie behind the criticism come constantly into expression, although still only in intimations. After taking the position that he did in the treatise in regard to art and science and the culture of the day, the next step was to eulogise original man, the primitive tribes still untouched by culture. It is therefore quite consistent with his whole method of thought when he, in several places, takes the part of the wild tribes, and to his opponents, who have described with eloquence their barbarous cruelty and vice, insists upon their innocence and ability to survive. If the wild men are vicious, it is because they have come into contact with Europeans and have learned it from them. "If I were the chief of one of the wild tribes of Nigritia, I would erect a gallows on the border of my country where I would hang without mercy the first European who dared to put his foot there." We shall soon see how Rousseau's sympathy for the wild people, which besides was one of the strong tendencies of the times, should come to constitute a rather important element throughout his entire "system."

More important to us, however, is the fact that on this road he found the formula which is the foundation of the whole of his later production and of his entire life-work. As you remember, in his account of his experience on the road to Vincennes, Rousseau exclaims in one place: "... Oh, if I could have written down the fourth part of what I saw and felt under the tree, with what clearness I should have pointed out all the contradictions of the social order, with what power I should have presented the misuse of all our institutions, with what logic I should have proven that man is good by nature and that it is only through institutions that he becomes evil." "Man is good by nature,"—this thought, which is the axis of Rousseau's production,—is,

it is true, the basis of his reasoning in 'Discours,' but there it had not come to its fullest expression; this takes place for the first time in the discussion. "They insist," he says in his answer to Bordes,¹ "that the first human beings were evil, from which it follows that mankind is evil by nature. This statement is of no little scope, and it appears to me that it needs proofs. But all the annals of nations that they dare to produce for this purpose speak rather in favour of the opposite opinion; and it takes many proofs to make me believe an absurdity." And in an annotation he says expressly: ". . . even though man is good by nature, which I believe" (*quoique l'homme soit naturellement bon, comme je le crois . . .*).

I cannot here undertake to expound the meaning that Rousseau puts into these words; this would be to interpret all of his works; what I wish to do here is simply to point out the historical fact that the first time Rousseau expressed his formula was in 1751 in a subordinate clause in a note to the 'Réponse à M. Bordes'; some years later it became the point of departure for his historical philosophy in the treatise on Inequality, and after that the foundation for his moral teaching in 'La Nouvelle Héloïse,' for his political opinions in 'Le Contrat Social,' and his pedagogical theories in 'Émile.'

¹ I. 130, 131.

XXII.

PRINCIPLE AND PRACTICE.

As I have said before, the philosophers looked upon Rousseau's 'Discours' as a caprice, an amusing paradox intended to surprise the world; it did not occur to them that he was different from them, that what they could applaud as a *boutade*, was to him the deadliest earnest, a cry of release that helped him to find himself and under which his own personality, hitherto crushed under the pressure of a mighty opinion, leaped forward in rebellious opposition to the world in which he lived. Among his antagonists also, there were some who had permitted themselves to take him fantastically, and who insisted that he spoke against his better convictions. There was hardly anything in the attacks made upon him that wounded him more deeply than this doubt as to the honesty of his aims. Yet he replied to them with calm dignity and without passion. He introduces his last defence, the preface to 'Narcisse,' with the following proud words: "In spite of my unwillingness, I am obliged to speak of myself; for I must either acknowledge the motives unjustly ascribed to me or else I must defend myself; the weapons will not be equal, that I understand well enough; for while they attack me with witticisms, I reply with reasons; but even if I can only confute my assailants, it is a matter of indifference to me whether or not I convince them; while I strive to deserve my self-respect, I have learned to get along without that of others, just as they, for the most part, manage to get along without mine. But even

if it is unimportant whether one thinks well or ill of me, it is not without importance to me that any one should have the right to think ill of me; and as to the truth which I am defending, it is not a matter of indifference that its champion might rightfully be accused of fighting for it only as a caprice or a vanity, without loving it and without knowing it.”¹

Some of his opponents, he says, feeling how impossible it is to combat the truths he proclaims, have hit upon the idea of distracting attention from the question by talking of the author instead.

“They insist that I do not mean a word I have said, that I say one thing and believe the opposite—that is to say, that I have proven things that are so beyond all reason that one can be sure that I have upheld them only for a joke. . . .

“They insist that I do not mean a word I have said; this is certainly a new and convenient way of replying to arguments; in this manner one could destroy the proofs of Euclid himself and all evidence that is to be found in the world. . . . They have certainly never found, either in my works or in my actions, anything to justify such a thought; . . . it is not permissible not to know that when a man speaks seriously, one is obliged to believe that he means what he says, unless his actions or his words belie him. . . .”

We see Rousseau speaks here not only of words and writings but also of actions. And indeed he was obliged to do so; it was an urgent logical conclusion of the very content of his manifesto, an essential part of which had as its aim the unveiling of the incongruity between pretence and reality, between principle and practice. If his opponents were not to be proven right in saying that the whole thing was a game, he would be obliged in the future to rearrange his life in harmony with the principles he had maintained with such strength, to relinquish every demand for luxury, glory, and worldly vanity for his own part.

¹ XI., 35.

And if his defensive writings against his assailants are a commentary on the 'Discours,' another and no less interesting one is the manner in which he now in reality took up his position in regard to his surroundings and himself.

It was at this time that he began what he calls his personal reform.

As you know Rousseau gained his livelihood by means of a miserable position as secretary for Mme. Dupin and her stepson Francueil, and it was difficult enough to manage for Therèse and himself on the wretched thousand francs that was his salary. However, Francueil had recently been made *fermier-général*, and he offered Rousseau the position of cashier, which immediately made him well-to-do. But he was not fitted for the position, and when he, a short time afterwards, became seriously ill,—fatally, as he says (no less a term would satisfy him),—he began to take his bearings. He had heard that the doctor had said he had no more than half-a-year to live. Why should he pass his few remaining days in a position which was so repellant to him?

" Besides, how was I to bring the stern principles that I had adopted into harmony with a position with which they had nothing in common? And was it not rather easy to preach disinterestedness and poverty when one was cashier for a *fermier-général*? These thoughts buzzed in my head during my fever, and became so firmly established that nothing could ever shake them again; and during my convalescence, I strengthened myself with cool deliberation in the conclusions I had reached while in my fever. I renounced for ever every thought of prosperity or advancement. Determined to spend the rest of the days I had before me in poverty and independence, I applied all the powers of my soul in breaking the chains of opinion and in doing courageously everything that seemed right to me, without concerning myself in the least with the judgment of men. The hindrances against which I had to fight and the efforts I made to conquer them were incredible. I succeeded as well as possible and better than I had hoped. Had I thrown

off the yoke of friendship as thoroughly as I did that of opinion,—I would have executed my plan in its entirety,—a plan which is perhaps the greatest or, as far as virtue is concerned at least, the most useful ever conceived by man. . . .

“However, I had to have something to live upon in that independence in which I proposed to live. I thought of a very simple expedient: to copy music for so much a page.”

And he made proof of his resolution.

“As soon as my conclusion was reached, . . . I wrote a letter to Francueil to inform him of it, and to thank him and Mme. Dupin for all their kindness, and to recommend myself as a music writer. Francueil, who did not understand a word of the whole thing and thought I was still in delirium, came flying to me; but he found me so determined in my purpose that he ceased trying to shake it. He told Mme. Dupin and everybody else in the world that I had gone crazy; I let him talk and went my own ways. I began my reform with my dress; I discarded all gold embroidery and white stockings, adopted a little round wig, left off my sword and sold my watch, saying to myself with inconceivable joy: ‘Thank God I no longer need to know what time it is.’”¹

He kept his fine linen, which dated from his diplomatic period in Venice, and of which he was especially fond; but here too fate was favourable to his plans,—for all his fancy shirts were stolen; he thus became cured of this little passion too, and secured for himself linen more suited to his present meagre wardrobe.

Naturally his reform was not concerned with the exterior alone. “I strove to weed out of my heart everything that had any connection with the opinions of men, everything that might prevent me, for fear of censure, from doing what I considered of itself right and reasonable. On account of the sensation that my work had created, my decision also attracted attention and brought me

¹ Confessions, L. VIII.; 3 cf. Émile, L. III.; Œuvres, vi. 390.

clients, so that I entered upon my vocation under good auspices." But nevertheless many hindrances arose; first it was his sickness, which was constantly making him unable to work, then it was his literary occupations, the polemical writings which took his time without bringing in much. But the worst was, that in spite of everything, people would not leave him in peace. "The success of my first writings had brought me into fashion. The position I had chosen aroused curiosity. People wanted to know this wonderful creature who sought nobody, and who cared for nothing except living in his own way; and that was enough to prevent his being able to do so. My room was never free from people, who, under different excuses, came and took my time. Women used a thousand schemes to get me to dinner. The more brusque I was toward people the more obtrusive they became; I could not say no to all; and although I created a thousand enemies by my refusals, I was nevertheless the incessant slave of my accommodating nature; and no matter how I acted, I did not have a single hour of the day at my own disposition.

"I felt, then, that to be poor and independent is not always so easy as one imagines. I wished to live by my vocation, but the public would not allow me to do so. They found a thousand means of keeping me from suffering for the time they stole from me. I was offered all sorts of gifts. I know of nothing more humiliating and degrading, and I saw no other way than to refuse all gifts, large and small, without any exception whatever. . . ." ¹

Thus relates Rousseau the history of his personal reform and of all the difficulties which came in the way of its execution.

What shall we think of it? I do not mean in regard to the truth of what he tells, for that is certain enough, and is corroborated by many; that he really shaped his course, as he says, and took advantage of the first opportunity to escape to the country in order to live his own life in peace—of this there is no doubt.

¹ Confessions, Book VIII.

But I mean, what shall we think of the reform itself, of its motives, its moral value?

Many of Rousseau's biographers treat his moral reform as pure comedy—as a wisely calculated assumption of a *rôle* that would make him as conspicuous as possible. Lasserre calls the chapter in which he refers to this transformation, "Le masque de Caton," and sees only a charlatan behind his behaviour. "What Rousseau calls his personal reform, was no more than the adoption of manners offensive to all propriety, which he called 'the polish of vice.' Under the pretence of making himself a Nature-creature, he did no more than repeat the character of the most forced personality in history—Diogenes. In order not to be conventional, he became a caricature." And Lemaître is no more gracious. "His conversion did not have much in common with that of Pascal, and never did moral reform have such worldly success. Rousseau as a wild man, impolite, without sword or watch, and above all, Rousseau as a music-copier, turned the elegant Paris of the day upside down. All beautiful ladies wished to have music copied by his hand. If Tolstoi should settle in Paris as a shoemaker, all of our beautiful socialists would come and order boots from him. . . . Notwithstanding his taste for loneliness, he is nevertheless concerned only with the impression he makes on others. He says that he shakes off the yoke of opinion which he defies, but to defy it with such a commotion is to think of it always. A moral reform that is so indiscreet, of so little privacy, is very questionable. The moment he attempts to descend into himself, the operation misses fire by the fact that when he investigates himself, it is not to confess to a single person, a priest, but to the whole world, and he is less concerned with reaping the moral fruits of his self-searching than with watching the effect of his confession on the public. On account of this, and because he, with one eye turned inward, is always twisting the other toward the outer world, one may say that this hermit who has told so

much about himself, perhaps did not know himself very well, and that he was constantly having illusions on his own behalf. He has hardly resolved to become better before he believes that he has already accomplished it."

Undoubtedly there is a great deal of truth in Lemaître's analysis of Rousseau's "succès de vertu," and there is much that is seductive in the clearness with which it is presented. But nevertheless I am convinced that it does not hit the centre. Lemaître writes under the weight of an antipathy constantly nourished by Rousseau's annoying ways, and this often prevented his seeing the essential. We cannot read Rousseau's account of his own moral improvement without a frequent sense of disharmony; we are irritated at every moment by his indiscretion, by the manner in which he exhibits his soul-struggles, by the boasting with which he speaks of the "incredible efforts" it cost him to execute a plan which was perhaps "the greatest, or at least as far as virtue is concerned, the most useful ever conceived by man." This irritation makes us suspicious, and can easily cause us to be unjust, if we do not take everything into consideration. We must remember what sort of a man this was who confesses—a self-made man, an intellectual parvenu who had lived in the most fortuitous circumstances without any social basis that could give him the spiritual modesty, the tact and fine feeling that so many insignificant people receive quite gratis through the conditions in which they are born and brought up. He was (and continued to be) a plebeian in many ways, a plebeian genius who never could really quite get over or hide his surprised admiration of his own personality's unique marvellousness. And undoubtedly there is also something somewhat plebeian in his "conversion," an unpleasing Salvation Army transport, in the loudness with which he confides to us the history of its progress, something absurd and contradictory in seeing a man point with a flourish of trumpets at the commonness of his newly-adopted clothing, and roar out from the housetops that he now intends to go into his secret chamber and break away

for ever from the swarming human crowd and from the sinful life of the world. But nevertheless all these are superficial things, and do not justify us in doubting the sincerity of the conversion.

It is worse that the conversion did not reach deep enough, that his moral reform left neglected spots, serious spots, and just those where one would expect to find its chief effects.

Lemaître is quite right in pointing out that the period of Rousseau's moral reform occurred exactly in those years (1750-51) when he placed his third and fourth children in a foundling asylum.

This is very serious, and might tempt one to describe a conversion that was without fruits in such an important question as hypocrisy and empty phrase-making. But in the first place, a conversion can certainly be sincere without permeating in every direction, and in the next place, even on this point it was not absolutely without fruit. Certainly Rousseau continued during these years also his heartless neglect of his paternal duties; but nevertheless there is a difference. Formerly he had spirited his children away quite thoughtlessly and without any self-upbraidings,—he says in accordance with the custom which he saw followed about him; but evidently new feelings now began to stir within him in this domain; the letter which he wrote to Mme. Francueil in April 1751, was an actual apology for his neglect of his children; in short his conscience had now become so restless that he saw that an apology was necessary, and I believe that this was one fruit of his "personal reform."

That this had such weak effects, and resulted only in words and feelings, was due partly to certain qualities in Rousseau and partly to the nature of his conversion. According to his own analysis, his reform consisted chiefly in his having decided to make himself independent of the judgment of men, and in wishing to arrange his life in accordance with his principles and opinions, his own feelings and instincts; what he strove for therefore was not

to live after a definite moral code but in harmony with himself. But now in Rousseau just as in his father, the father-instinct was very weakly developed, and it is therefore easily explicable that his reform or conversion did not reach down into these regions of his conscience with any great force. But to build upon this an unfavourable judgment in regard to the sincerity and value of the conversion on the whole, would certainly be a psychological error.

If we are to form a justifiable opinion in regard to the "reform," we must not limit our point of view to those particulars where it failed in its results, but rather extend it to include the whole of his life's domain, and investigate it in order to discover whether he really after this crisis did become another, a twice-born, as William James calls it in his analysis of religious conversions.

To decide this it is of interest first to glance at that moment when he formed his determination to begin a new life.

He had as we know been struggling with all his powers for about ten years to attain a position; he had made attempts as a musician, as a diplomat, as a poet; everything had failed, he had not been able to convince the world of the great powers that dwelt within him; he still doubted his own literary talent, but was hardly in doubt of his being something unique in one way or another; his ambition was ardent and he was determined to gain a reputation.

And so he awakens one morning and finds himself famous, he becomes the burning theme of the day in the world-capital; every one is talking of him, every one seeks him; from his obscurity, which up to this time had been his greatest cross, he had suddenly risen into the bright light of fame, and this had been his most passionate desire.

One might have expected that he would have abandoned himself to his victory, his first, and a great and decisive one, that he would have pursued it, made use of it in order to make a position for himself, taken it as the point of

departure for a march toward those heights of society which he had formerly coveted, that he would have exulted in transports over at last having reached his goal.

But what is it he does? He descends into himself, he reckons up his personal account, asks himself seriously what demands his opinions make on his actions, and he comes to the conclusion that he must adopt a new nature, that he must renounce, give up his vanity, discard every thought of advancement, riches, the sweetness of glory. He turns away from the world, he growls at those who bring him invitations, he says no to those who wish to protect him, he refuses all gifts which might lighten the burden of life for him. The manner in which he did this was so challenging that it is easy to understand that he was looked upon as a *poseur*, as a cunning dog, fully aware that his sensational manner was a piquant condiment that would help in an eminent degree to increase his reputation. But this conclusion is hardly consistent with the fact that in addition to the change in his exterior manner, there were actions, serious actions, which had a decisive effect on his future. He was not content with saying he wished to be poor; he really did renounce the position he had recently got, and which secured him comfort and prosperity in a convenient way.

A year later Rousseau was subjected to a serious temptation: his opera "Devin du Village" had had a marvellous success, it had been presented at Fontainebleau, and the next day he had been summoned to an audience with the king; it was in regard to a pension which he was certain of getting, if he should go. He felt highly flattered by the king's attention, nor was the pension to be despised either. But he did not go. He passed a sleepless night, spent in excitement, and the thoughts that visited him were not exclusively elevated ones; he suffered from physical difficulties, and he looked forward with terror to something's happening at the critical moment; he was not sure of his presence of mind, was afraid he would lose

his self-possession in the presence of his Majesty. All this played a part in his decision. But the chief reason lay much deeper and was connected with his "personal reform." "Thus I let slip the pension which in a way was offered me; but at the same time I escaped the yoke it would have laid upon me. Adieu truth, liberty, courage. How could I dare to talk of independence and disinterestedness? If I should accept this pension I should be forced into flattery or silence. . . . In refusing it I believed I was acting in harmony with my principles."¹

And he got no pension, he retained his independence and bound himself neither to flattery nor to silence—in this he showed a marked difference to most of his literary brothers.

And there are several other acts which show that Rousseau's personal reform was earnest. I account as one of them the well-known story of his behaviour at the dinner in Bout de Banc. He sat with Saint-Lambert, Duclos, Mlle. Quinault, Mme. d'Épinay, and one or two others. The subject of religion came up, as it so often did. Saint-Lambert expressed himself with great boldness in opposition to every form of faith; Mme. d'Épinay protested, and asked for grace for natural religion at least. "It is no better than the others," said Saint-Lambert. Rousseau upheld the cause of the evangelical religion—this was natural morality, the kernel of Christianity. Saint-Lambert would not enter into this, but said "How about a God that gets insulted and then becomes appeased!" "You are not an atheist, are you?" asked Mlle. Quinault. Rousseau became annoyed at the answer he gave, and mumbled something between his teeth; but they only laughed at him. Rousseau: "If it is cowardice to suffer people to speak ill of an absent friend, it is a crime to suffer them to speak ill of God who is present; and I, gentlemen, I believe in God,"—and as the others continued the conversation in the same bantering tone, Rousseau rose up in his wrath

¹ Confessions, Book VIII.

and said, "If you say another word more I shall leave the table." And he was just about to make good this threat when a new guest arrived.¹

This was in 1751, exactly at the time when he says he was at work on his personal reform. When we think of the society in which Rousseau found himself on this occasion, and when we remember his embarrassment and his fear of ridicule, we understand that it took no little courage to maintain, in these surroundings, such antiquated opinions or to behave with an earnestness so out of keeping with a drawing-room manner.

In the letters which Rousseau writes at this time we find plain-spoken expressions that give evidence of his new view of life and of the resolution he had formed to break entirely away from the demands of fashion in order to live an independent life in liberty and poverty. In a letter to Voltaire, written the 30th of January 1750, he speaks of "the promise I have given myself never to praise any one to his face"; and later in the same letter he says, "from this day I have renounced literature and all faith in becoming famous; as I have given up every hope of reaching it through my own genius, I disdain to attain it cheaply by means of arts. . . ."

He wrote (the 20th of April 1751) to Raynal, who was at that time the editor of 'Mercure de France,' and who had probably asked him for a contribution to his paper: "Like a true Swiss I had imagined that in order to make a way in literature 'à bien faire' was sufficient; but as I have now learned from experience that 'bien faire' is the first and greatest hindrance to be overcome in this career, and as I have found that other talents than those I have or wish to have are necessary, I have immediately withdrawn into that obscurity which corresponds just as much with my talents as with my character, and where you, for the sake of the honour of your own paper, should allow me to remain."

Of about the same date as this (the 28th of May 1751),

¹ Mémoires de Mme. d'Épinay, i. 379-81.

there is a letter to the Genevan Marcé de Mezières,¹ in which he proudly says:—

“Never has wealth, which I despise, nor the world’s splendour, which I hate, drawn from me the least homage or attention.” In opening a correspondence with this countryman of his he makes his own conditions, and they are quite in harmony with his personal reform. “Formalities and compliments, and everything that is called etiquette, are unbearable to me; and I beg you therefore to omit all such things. Your letters shall be my model as to style; but let mine be your model in everything that concerns ceremony.”

“You know,” he says, “that I am the son of an excellent citizen: all the circumstances of my life have served to strengthen me in the love of fatherland with which he inspired me. By living among slaves I have learned to feel to the depths what liberty means. How happy are you who live in the lap of your family, in your own country, who dwell among real men, and need to obey only laws and reason.

“You wish to speak of literature, and I am quite willing. We shall attempt to estimate all the wonders of this century, that is so praised for its enlightenment and so justly notorious for its bad taste; this century so fruitful of beaux-esprits and so barren of geniuses; and we shall cast flowers on the graves of the really great and neglected men who laid the immovable foundation of the temple of the Muses and of the great philosophical building on which nowadays so many beautiful card-houses are built.”

And, finally, I will quote a line or two from a letter to Mme. de Warens (14th of February 1752). It was written a short time after the wonderful success of the ‘*Devin du Village*.’ “. . . Notwithstanding all this glory, I continue to live by my copying-work, which makes me independent and which would make me happy if . . . &c.”

We see that it is not only in his public writings that

¹ In “Correspondence” (Hachette, Œuvres, x. p. 65), as well as in other editions of Rousseau’s letters, this letter is erroneously addressed to Moltou. See *Annales*, iii. 195, note.

Rousseau is concerned with the thoughts and the life-reform which seemed to him at that time to be the only thing of importance; it appears constantly in his private letters too, and it is worth remarking that here it is always purely incidental; all the letters that I have quoted are letters for particular occasions, letters of reply which have their particular purpose, and which have not a single thing to do with his personal reform; nevertheless it obtrudes itself, shows its influence in his conception of every little thing, seems to permeate him to his innermost depths.

An antipathetic observer will of course be able to say that all this proves nothing as to the sincerity of his resolutions or the depth of his crisis, that it by no means proves that he was not acting; that it proves only that he was an unusually clever actor who never lost sight of his *rôle*. But even if this were possible, which is difficult for me to acknowledge, there is still one thing more, one which for me is the most important and absolutely decisive.

If Rousseau's attack upon the culture of the day and his practical effort to make himself independent of it, had been a temporary episode in his life, then we might easily acknowledge the possibility of the whole thing's being play-acting. But this was just exactly what it was not. He lived almost thirty years after 1750; in the course of this time he became the world's most famous man, even Voltaire could not out-rival him; he had the fullest and easiest opportunity to make capital of his fame; he could have acquired riches, glory, and titles; in fact, he could have helped himself to everything that the world prizes; he needed only to stretch out his hand. Yet he did not do so; he continued to live in that poverty and independence which was to him the most precious thing in the world; he continued to the end of his life to support himself miserably by his copying-work; he made no effort to secure advantages, or protection; he wrote exclusively that which he felt called upon to write, out of the indignation and enthusiasm of his heart; he did not yield an inch in order to please or to gain something; he subjected himself, with cool

deliberation, to criticism, persecution, and exile. His literary brothers, hardly without exception, bowed before the mighty ones of the day, flattered Mme. de Pompadour, courted Catherine the Second, buzzed about the palaces of rich men, enriched themselves, and through their patrons climbed to respected positions in society; Rousseau lived in stern loneliness to his life's end without seeking support from any quarter. There were many who stretched their hands out after him; the philosophers did not wish to lose him, the theologians would have been more than glad to have him; but no consideration of any kind whatever ever drew from him a word that was not his most earnest conviction, and that did not distribute its lashes impartially to both sides. That he gradually collected a numerous flock of adherents about him, did not mean that he attached himself to a school,—it meant that he himself formed a school. What has been called his ingratitude was really nothing more than his independence. The manner in which he asserted it was not always attractive, his morbid sensitiveness, his lack of even balance, the uncertainty of his education would not permit his soul to come to rest within him, to attain that dignity or harmony which makes pride a matter of course and unassailable from without; he could, with rude violence, cut short advances whose source was only disinterested admiration, he could suddenly break connection with friends in morbid fear of encroachment on his independence, the inborn suspiciousness of his Genevan nature sometimes developed into a sort of intermittent insanity; in which he saw enemies and persecution in the most innocent and harmless things. His loneliness increased his conception of his own marvellousness, and his incessant occupation with himself sometimes assumed a form of arrogance that could not be otherwise than repellent. But all these things were only excrescences, evidences of his nature which in so many respects was abnormal, of his exaggerated sensitiveness, of his unbridled fantasy, of the rhythm of his being, which caused his soul to sway spasmodically

between apathetic stolidity and violent excitement, his hysterical temperament, which made it impossible for him to become a perfectly innocent and unvexed dweller on that blessed shore which, since the vision of Vincennes, had floated before his eyes as the goal that nature had intended men to reach. This is no proof against the sincerity of his personal reform. In order to be just, we must remember that there is scarcely in the whole literature of the world, indeed scarcely in the whole history of the world, a single personality that we know so well as that of Rousseau,—his incessant self-analysis and the confession built upon it, expose him to us in his entire nakedness without the protection of even a fig-leaf; we know every patch in his soul, every despicable thought, every sinful desire, every sordid temptation, and even when he defends himself and boasts of his own nobility, he does so with a naïve self-sufficiency, that does not deceive us. It is doubtful if there are many that could stand the test of being turned inside out so thoroughly and minutely. But notwithstanding all this, the final sum of his actions is that, in all the great things, he really did execute the principles which he, during his crisis, chose as the guiding stars of his life. It is not to be denied that he from this time, as author and as human being, as prophet and as workman, lived his life without consideration of the opinions of men, listening solely to what his own conviction judged good or evil. It is not to be denied that the whole of his remaining life was a proof—one full of self-sacrifice and distress—of the sincerity of his conversion.

I am quite aware that there are authors who have not been willing to acknowledge this proof, but who, notwithstanding everything, have obstinately retained their opinion of Rousseau as a humbug. They reason approximately thus: when he sent in his reply to the academic question he was fully aware of having delivered a paradox, one in which he himself did not believe; his only object was to create a sensation, to shine by his talents, to dazzle by his elo-

quence, to attain the fame after which his ambitious soul thirsted. But when his success had passed his wildest expectations, his attention became aroused, and he began to reflect: he discovered that he had entered upon a way that might lead to unsuspected heights, his own work took his breath away, he saw that he could do nothing wiser than become the man he had given himself out to be; with Cato's mask before his face, with Diogenes' example as a model for his behaviour, he would distinguish himself so sharply from the others that competed for public favour, that all eyes must turn toward him, the unique phenomenon. And he clad himself in a masquerading costume, and he played his *rôle* with a seriousness that never failed; he repudiated, with indignation, every jocular hint, he even submitted to poverty and persecution, allowed his books to be burned and himself to be exiled,—all in order to support the *rôle* which his first book had forced upon him.

There is a tiny kernel of truth in this reasoning; in all probability, both the writing of the 'Discours' and the sensation it created did have some influence on Rousseau's own manner of thinking and on his convictions; one is not fully aware of what one's opinion really is before one has expressed it, and no matter how sincere a man may be in regard to his own production, it is not impossible, on that account, that the work may have a reactionary influence on its author. I presume that Rousseau's conviction became more and more evident to him during the production of the 'Discours,' and when the work lay finished before him in all its paradoxical rebelliousness, and he was attacked from all quarters so that he was obliged to defend it, I believe that this certainly contributed to the strengthening of his belief, and forced him to take a stand, to accept the consequences. And the success it had, the appreciation of his talents which it brought him from all quarters, even from his antagonists, also helped to increase his confidence, his conviction that there must be something in this that aroused so many conflicts, and put so many passions into

motion. The creation of 'Discours,' as well as its reception, thus certainly were elements in his conversion or personal reform. Indeed he himself says expressly that during his sickness he entered upon his new life as a result of the conclusion to which he had come, that there should be harmony between principle and practice; it was after having proclaimed his pessimistic view of the rottenness of the culture of the day that he felt it his duty to oppose it not only in words but in actions.

But there is an interminably great difference between this natural and normal progress of events, and the assumption that Rousseau's entire life after this, with all its renunciations and sacrifices, was only a mask he assumed in order to impose upon his fellow-creatures. When one remembers the splendid unity which, notwithstanding many apparent contradictions, underlies all his writings and actions, such an assumption seems so unreasonable that it can only be explained as the result of a preconceived antipathy; and I say with Rousseau that I demand a thousand proofs before I accept an absurdity. If we were to deny every possibility of Rousseau's sincerity, we should make out his life and his lifework to be a unique and gigantic farce, truly and diabolically comic, where the laughter would apply not only to the charlatan himself but, in a still greater degree, to the whole world which allowed itself to be made a fool of so thoroughly, even to the point of being induced (in essential matters) to move its guide-posts under the influence of his tricks.

But in such a farce we cannot believe; only the words that come from a burning conviction have the power to light the fire in the hearts of others; humbug may have an effect for a time, but it soon gets exposed; the knowledge of this has taught us to understand that Mahomet was not a deceiver, and that Ignatius Loyola was a great man.

We must believe Rousseau when he says that there was earnestness in his personal reform; we must take him at his word, because he has sealed it with his actions. The crisis

he lived through in these years was a real conversion; he was a different being after it; before, he had been a slave to opinion; he had rebelled against it, but had bowed under its pressure; after the crisis he became himself.

The point of departure for his transformation was the vision on the road to Vincennes, when the world of impressions, experiences, and thoughts that had lain stored in his subconsciousness poured in and became his spiritual property. Then "he found himself." The 'Discours' was the first fruit of this find; under the discussion he discovered new provinces, and, in his succeeding writings, he little by little gained more secure possession of the many rich springs that welled up at the bottom of his unique personality.

In all essentials, however, Rousseau continued to be the same man that he became after the Vincennes vision and its immediate consequences, and therefore it was important for us to account for this crisis in such detail.

It is quite certainly an exaggeration to say that the complete Rousseau is to be found in his first 'Discours'; later he not only developed his nature and applied his principles to numerous domains and conditions, where he had limited himself in 'Discours' to a mere suggestion of them, but he also widened his chief point of view in many ways, mounted to heights where he saw deeper and further than in his first production.

But even then he had already taken his standpoint, that standpoint at one and the same time so pessimistic and so optimistic; deeply pessimistic in its view of the life and ideals of the eighteenth century, equally optimistic in his conviction of the goodness and richness of human nature, rich in spite of the fact that many of its possibilities have been wasted.

If one wishes to understand 'Discours,' one must not look upon it as a philosophic solution of the question itself in its entirety; one must judge it as a contribution of the times having its chief significance and value when seen against the background of the conditions that called it forth.

As a philosophical solution the treatise suffers from great weaknesses, and I am thinking, not of the striking exaggerations, not of the many absurdities, not of the illogical mixture of science pure and simple with its excrescences; but I am thinking, first and foremost, of the proposition itself. Here, as Paul Hensel has pointed out with the greatest clearness, Rousseau himself was still the son of the eighteenth century, bound by the utilitarian view of life which controlled the times. To Rousseau, in the 'Discours,' as well as to his contemporaries, the philosophers of enlightenment, it seemed equally clear that the value of culture is to be measured by the degree in which it serves the morality and happiness of mankind. The proposition was the same for both parts, but the replies were different, were diametrically opposed. The enlightened philosophers maintained and repeated, until it became a truism, that culture—enlightenment, knowledge, the arts—is the foundation of all morality, and therefore of all the happiness of mankind. When all people shall have triumphed over ignorance, they will be moral and happy. In opposition to this dogmatic confidence in the beatific omnipotence of culture, Rousseau maintained the contrary paradox that culture and morality—and therefore happiness also—are irreconcilable. In regard to his own times, he was undoubtedly right; he could rightfully appeal to history to prove that culture does not make people better or happier; he had floods of examples from the world which surrounded him and which was about to burst in admiration of its own culture and knowledge, to illustrate his theory, that morality and culture are not exactly synonymous terms. And he is also more truly right in that a constant disproportion does seem to exist between culture and happiness. Or, as Hensel expresses it: "Dass jeder Schritt in die Kultur hinein nicht nur einen Schritt von der Natur fort, sondern auch eine Erschwerung für das Ziel des naiven Glückstrebens bedeutet, wird heute wohl nur noch von wenigen bestritten."

But morality and happiness are not the only human

values; there are other values which lie "jenseits von Gut und Böse, jenseits vom Glück." "Wer fragt nach Glück?" asks Nietzsche. "Das thun nur Engländer und Weiberkühe," he replies.

Culture does not inquire after the happiness of mankind; nor does the artist or the man of science abandon himself to his work in order to attain personal happiness by means of it. He is driven by his spirit of investigation; he cannot do otherwise than abandon himself to it; it is the only thing that gives significance to his life, even when he sees that it injures him, even when he feels that it is consuming him, even when it fills his soul with a restlessness that denies him a single hour of blessed peace,—yet he finds a content for his life in his super-individual struggle for truth, which means more to him than all the happiness in the world. This selfless infatuation for truth is one of the fruits of culture, just as it is its chief aim; it belongs to the culture-individual as distinct from the primitive individual, and in this fact culture has its absolute and self-existent value, quite independent of the question as to whether or not it serves mankind's morality. Of these super-individual values the eighteenth century was still unaware, nor did Rousseau take cognizance of them in 'Discours'; his personal reform, as well as the whole of his succeeding life in his perilous struggle for truth, was an evidence of their existence; but they had not yet become a part of his philosophy.

Not yet. For when Hensel says that this purely idealistic comprehension of the self-existent value of knowledge, independent of its influence on the fate of man, always continued to be a secret to Rousseau, I cannot agree with him. In his writings, from later periods, there are to be found, as I shall point out when the time comes, many expressions which go to show that he not only felt the pure longing for truth in his heart, but that he also, with full consciousness, gave it the place that belongs to it. Indeed, it appears to me that as early as in his 'Réponse au roi de Pologne' he

gave a somewhat clear expression of this acknowledgment: "The Creator of all things is the source of truth; to know all is one of His divine qualities; to acquire knowledge and to widen one's view ("étendre ses lumières") is in a way to become a participant in 'la suprême intelligence.'" This seems to me to be comprehension of the intrinsic value of the enthusiasm for truth, independent of morality and happiness, especially when viewed in connection with the following: "My opponent further dilates upon all the advantages that men can gain from the arts and sciences in various directions," &c.

However, it is quite true that in 'Discours' itself the question of the value of culture depends exclusively on its relation to the virtue and happiness of mankind.

In the foregoing I have attempted to give a detailed account of the biographical and psychological conditions under which Rousseau's development and psychic growth took place. Let us now in conclusion sum up, in a few words, the results to which our investigations have led us.

The first thing we learned of Rousseau's biography was that he was born in Geneva. This is of the greatest significance for his view of the world that he was to have a share in reshaping. Although he left the town of his birth at an early age and never went back to live there, he nevertheless retained from his childhood living impressions of the patriarchal rule of the proud little republic, and the ideal state that he later described, and that was to be so fateful for France and the whole of mankind, grew from these childish memories, strengthened by his admiring worship of the ancient free-states, acquired through his reading.

By birth Rousseau belonged to what the Genevan called "la bonne bourgeoisie," the respectable middle class; but by his own achievements he became a *déclassé*,—fell from the round of the social ladder to which he belonged,—indeed he lost the right to belong to any social class, became a vagabond, grasping after whatever means of existence came

in his way. His experiences added envy's intensity to his sense of justice and the plebeian's turgid hatred of those that have a position in society; had he not stood as lackey behind the chairs of the Countess Vercellis and of Count Gouvion he would not have been able to tear the mask from high-born rulers with such depth of feeling; he thereby became the father of the modern proletariat sentiments that proved such a mighty impulse in the development of the nineteenth century.

But his vagabond days taught him something else also—they taught him the joys of solitude; when he, day in and day out, wandered alone and on foot through Switzerland, Savoy, Italy, France, when he at nightfall lay down to rest under a bush, with the glittering stars of heaven above him, when he awakened with the sunbeams playing on his face, while the birds twittered and the grasshoppers sang in the dewy grass,—at such moments his heart was full of devotion, full of an exuberant sense of solitude, which brought earnestness to his view of life.

Rousseau was Europe's greatest wanderer. I know well that there were others before him, and here all of us will think of Ludvig Holberg; but with Rousseau it was different. Holberg walked because it was cheaper to walk than to drive, and in order to reach his destination. But Rousseau did not care at all about reaching any destination; he walked for the sake of walking, to listen to nature's sweet sounds, to bathe his eyes in the light of the landscape, to saunter and dream, to isolate himself, so as not to feel chains or pressure, not to think of the next moment, but to melt into the life of the universe.

Rousseau never went to school; he read in his youth whatever he came upon, and filled his head with all sorts of nonsense from which he never freed himself; he did not begin to study until he was a grown man, and then without a teacher. He went his own ways with no other method than that which his longing to understand life's phenomena gave him; his knowledge was therefore most defective; he

never became an authority on any subject, but he assimilated the material he mastered as nourishment for his own originality.

Thus did everything in Rousseau's life co-operate to develop in him the individual at the expense of the social feelings. Without parents or home, without fatherland, unidentified with school or community, equipped with a fantasy that was always ready to build the most wonderful fairy-castles, and with a sensibility so overpowering that it almost ran away with his reason,—such was the genius that in 1742 entered Paris, the home of wit and elegance, of convention and disbelief.

Some time passed before he became fully aware of the inherent hostility existing between him and his environment. But when he did understand, it was as though a violent concussion had taken place, and from this concussion there sprang, as in an explosion, Rousseau's first 'Discours.' The thoughts that he expressed here, and in the writings defending it, were, in his later works, to attain to a richer expansion, and partially also to be subjected to rather important modifications, but even as early as about the year 1750 Rousseau was, in all essentials, the man he continued to be for the remainder of his life.

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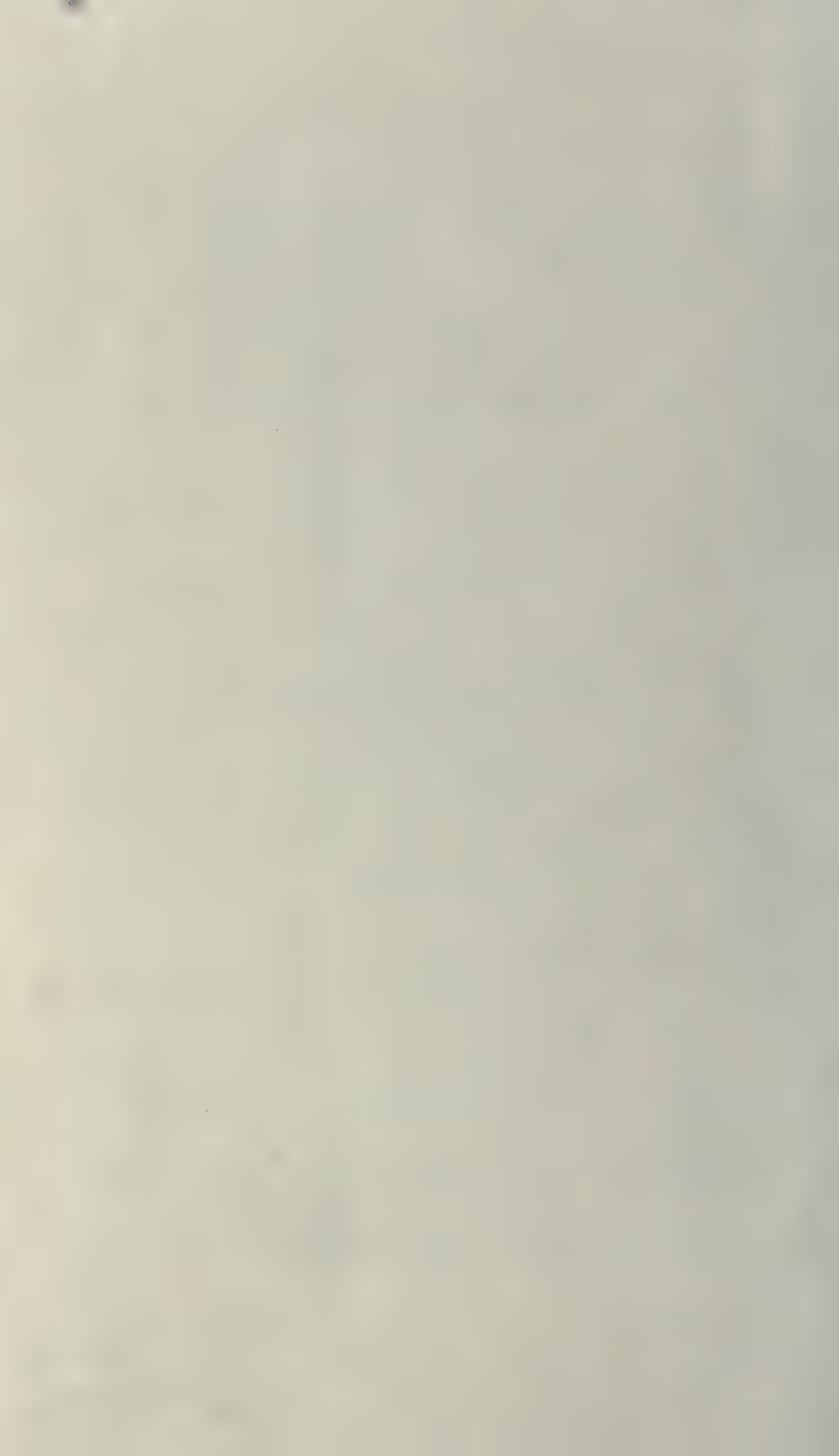
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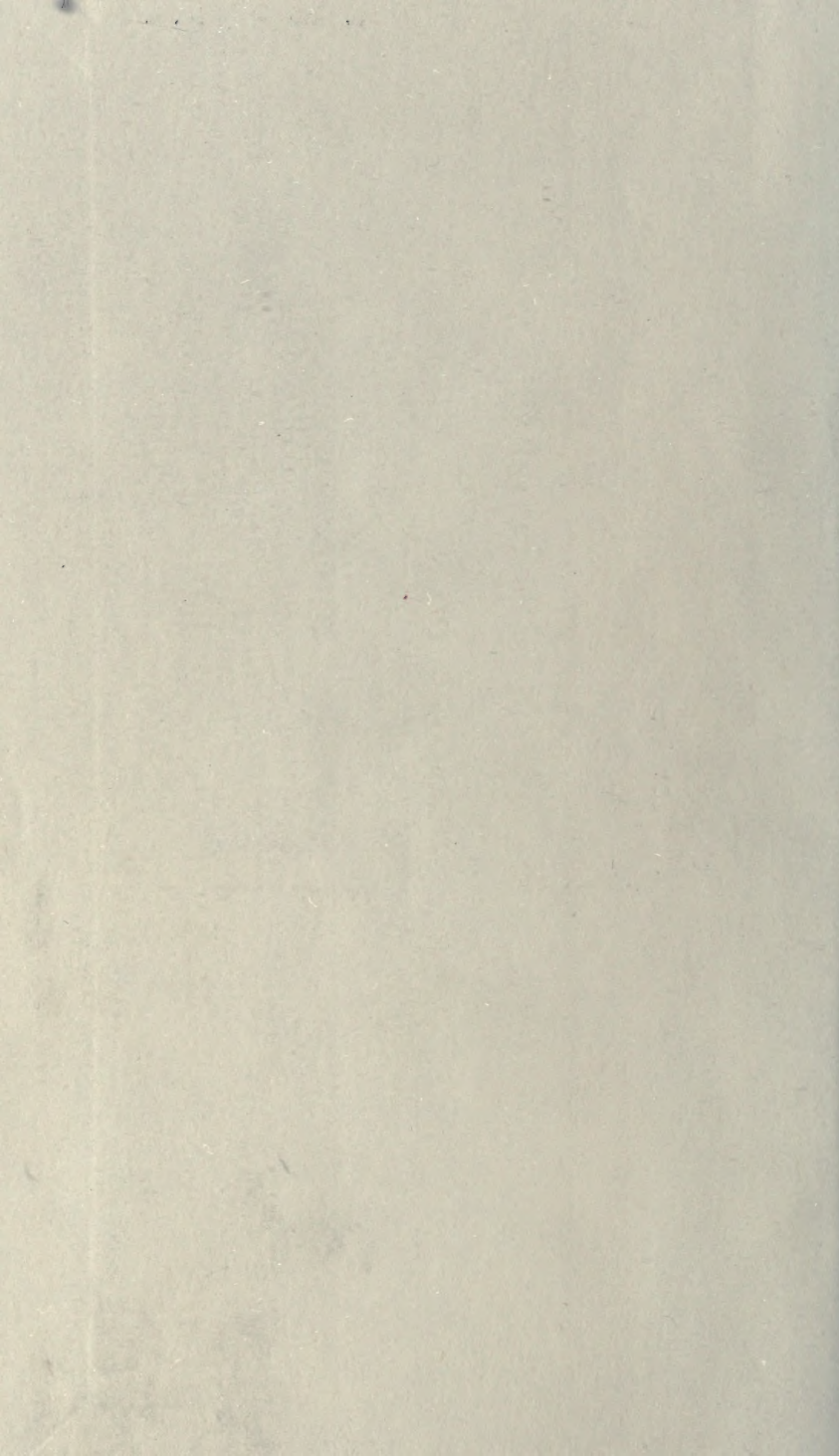
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